WHAT IS IT THAT MAKES YOU SO STRONG? : A YOUNG MAN'S SPIRITUAL GUIDE TO HEALING AND WHOLENESS

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ABSTRACT

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The specific problem examined in this study was how to create an environment for young males to have uninhibited dialogue about their hurt and pain so that they could develop to their fullest potential, and also be empowered to help others overcome their distresses. The researcher involved the youth through the use of resource tools such as Bible lessons, movies, interviews, group therapy, workshops, rap sessions and panel discussions, while using a qualitative research method to achieve transformation. The researcher discovered that youth who participated in this process became honest with themselves and interactive in relationships with others and God.

ABBREVIATIONS

AMEC	African Methodist Episcopal Church
KJV	King James Version
NKJV	New King James Version
REB	Revised English Bible

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I must thank my parents, Elders Benjamin (deceased) and Rosabelle Conley, for keeping the family together, leading by example and instilling within me a scholarly hunger and thirst for academic excellence. I also want to acknowledge my sisters and brothers for their love and support: Gwen Conley, Angela Henson, Tee Jackson, Reverend Edward Henson, Dennis Moton and Ronald Moton.

I must also express my gratitude to Dr. Felix Burrows, who was my initial mentor in this research study. Although my new mentor, Dr. A. D. Washington, was assigned to me, Dr. Burrows remained on the sideline to coach and encourage me on this academic journey. My research project, however, would not have come to fruition if it had not been for Dr. Washington's wise guidance and who challenged me to face my own hurt and pain again, to go forward and to do ministry for young men who desperately need a guide to direct, teach and uplift them through healing and wholeness gained through dialogue and relational encounters.

This research project would not have been possible if it were not for my peers, who endured with me until the end: Reverend Dr. Lanell Guyton and Reverend Matthew Zuehlke; my context associates: Jackie Dennis, Ophelia Jones, Bernard Powers, Mildred Powers and Cheryl Witt; and my professional associates: Willie C. Glover, PhD., Donald Jefferson, Ed.D. and Reverend W. E. Marshall, D. Min. And, I also want to give my sincere appreciation to four courageous young men, Youth A, B, C, and D (who with regret did not complete the program), who sacrificed some of their precious and

demanding time as they revisited their past, remembered their hurt and pain, and opened themselves to healing and new possibilities. The names of this study's participant's must remain anonymous given the "Confidentiality statement and Consent form" signed by them and agreed among us that their names would not be published, due to the confidential nature of the research project. Again, my thanks to those who shared their experience and encouraged me.

I express my graduate to Rev. Dr. Henry Y. White, a graduate of United Theological Seminary (UTS) and Pastor of Brown Memorial AME Church in Washington, D.C., who convinced me about the value of a UTS education.

I must show much love and give thanks to Raymond Blanks for his critique of the manuscript as well as his input.

I would be deeply remiss if I forgot to mention my mentee, Minister Kelvin Anthony, who kept me prayed-up and called me nearly everyday to hear "a progress report" on the research project.

I cannot forget the continued prayers and support of the church families I pastored, love and maintain a caring relationship including: Grady-Madison AMEC, in Madison, Alabama; Saint Luke AMEC in Hueytown, Alabama; and Ward Chapel AMEC in Selma, Alabama.

The chief cornerstone to the research project was provided by Mamie Danzey, who served on the evaluation team, traveled across the state of Alabama and attended every session with the youth, typed and edited the manuscript, and fine-tuned the research project with her input and expertise. If I had ten thousand tongues, then each one of them

would not be enough to share my joy to her for helping me to complete this research project.

Finally, but by no means the least or the last, I praise and give adoration to God who always makes all things possible. This chapter in my life where I have been in pursuit of a doctoral degree has been long and challenging. I have made it thus far and endured with a confident faith. I now close this chapter of my life only to begin a new chapter that chronicles my continued walk with God on this journey of faith with works.

DEDICATION

The work and effort that I have invested in this doctoral program at United Theological Seminary are dedicated to several God-sent people who now are among "a cloud of witnesses," and have made me a better person as a result of encountering them at a crossroad in life: Edwynn Joan Moton, my birth mother, Elder Benjamin Conley, my father, Edward James Turner, my uncle, Sherri Moton, my youngest sister, and Jason "Arch" Conley, my youngest brother, who was tragically murdered at the hand of a young African American male.

One of my prayers during my academic journey towards a doctoral degree had always been that I wanted the entire family to be there to see me graduate with a doctoral degree in hand. And all of you that I mentioned were there and you had the best seats in the house, as you viewed me from heaven's balcony and as I walked across the stage. At least from my perspective, your lives were cut short, but God's plan must be done. As a thought of comfort and consolation for me, our forbearers say that "God knows best" and "God does not make a mistake."

Your legacies, however, live on because you taught me how to live life to its fullest, and that is by taking one day at a time. And within each day, one must learn to trust and obey God, work and minister in God's vineyard to all people "while it is day," and to be loving, faithful and true to one's self, family and God.

For my family members who have crossed over to the other side, one glad morning I too will take wings like a dove and fly away home to be with you and the Lord.

EPIGRAPH

Dancing With God

When I meditated on the word **Guidance,** I kept seeing "dance" at the end of the word.

I remember reading that doing God's will is a lot like dancing.

When two people try to lead, nothing feels right.

The movement doesn't flow with the music, and everything is quite uncomfortable and jerky.

When one person realizes that, and lets the other lead, both bodies begin to flow with the music. One gives gentle cues, perhaps with a nudge to the back or by pressing lightly in one direction or another. It's as if two become one body, moving beautifully.

The dance takes surrender, willingness, and attentiveness from one person and gentle guidance and skill from the other.

My eyes drew back to the word "**Guidance**." When I saw "G": I thought of God, followed by "u" and "i". "God, "u" and "i" dance." God, you, and I dance.

As I lowered my head, I became willing to trust that I would get guidance about my life.

Once again, I became willing to let God lead.

My prayer for you today is that God's blessings and mercies are upon you on this day and everyday. May you abide in God, as God abides in you.

Dance together with God, trusting God to lead and to guide you through each season of your life.

Author Unknown

INTRODUCTION

Sunday after Sunday, a pastor adorned in a black cassock stands behind a pulpit, and gazes into the faces of a waiting congregation. The majority of the congregants are black women. But overlooked in this sea of people are four young African American males, who struggle to make sense out of their lives, and whose growth and development have been stymied by past and/or present hurt and pain. They have been exposed to experiences they should have never had and lacked enriching experiences they should have had.

As the pastor prepares to announce the "Call to Worship," one wonders if the pastor is aware that one of the youth was once a devil worshipper, has problems interpreting his own sexual orientation, and frequently looses his temper easily. The pastor begins the "Call of Worship," "I was glad when they said unto me..." But one wonders, however, if the pastor is aware of the sadness in the life of another young male, who automatically breaks off relationships with other people who present their problems to him. This same youth plays Russian roulette with his own life and appears to have a "death wish" towards others who challenge his manhood. He was also abruptly separated from his father when his dad lost his job and began drinking heavily and obsessively. His mother relocated the family (without the father) to another state.

The pastor continues to recite the "Call of Worship", "…Let us go into the house of the Lord..." But one wonders again if the pastor is aware that another young male, standing in the congregation, who had been victimized by the devastation, destruction and death caused by Hurricane Katrina. His family subsequently relocated to another city and after

living there for two years; once again he became homeless, while still in high school, for several months and lived out of a car with his younger brother. This youth also frequently gets angry with his classmates who live in material abundance, yet take their lavish lifestyles for granted. Across the church, a fourth youth stands as the pastor completes the first line of the "Call to Worship," "…Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem." But one also wonders if the pastor is aware that this youth has received several citations for ungovernable behavior, disrespects his mother in a single-parent household, and has on several occasions struck her and ran away from home to be with gang members. As the "Call to Worship" is completed, the pastor invites the congregation to sing a congregational hymn of praise to God. For these four teenaged males, however, they feel that there is nothing to sing about nor is church really relevant to them. Again, one wonders if the pastor is aware of these facts.

These scenarios are real and the young men involved in these incidents are also real and have experienced hurt and pain at some point in their lives, and sometimes life has truly been a nightmare for them. Why a nightmare? They wanted help from someone but they could not find relief at home, in their school, in their community or the church. Their silent voices seemed to be awakened in their actions as they lashed out in anger at the world demanding to be heard. Silence has been the cure for their present distress; yet, they do not understand the nature of their present disruptive conduct and troubled attitudes.

Deeply embedded in the lives of each one of these youth are hurt and pain. Their hurt and pain have not been understood, nor have been grieved. Somehow their hurt and pain either was taken for granted, ignored or treated as insignificant. Years later, their

experiences of hurt and pain have found expression in the forms of an identity crisis, explosions of anger, acts of aggression, including loss and separation. Andrew Sung Park, in his work, *From Hurt to Healing*, states this of hurt and pain and the church's responsibility, "When people's deep wounds are not healed, the wounds become vortexes of troubled waters, intertwined with their own instinct of survival and fear…In this world of violence, the church must address the issue of these deep wounds…if the church wants to be relevant to and effective in transforming and healing the world."[1]

Therefore, the nature of this research project is to meet the challenges of the task to liberate the lives of teenaged males, like the four African American youth in our research study, from their hurt and pain, both past and/or present. Secondly, it is an effort to establish a spiritual guide or model of ministry for healing and wholeness that can be replicated. Moreover, it does not matter whether the pastor is aware of the hurt and pain in the lives of the young males in the congregation. What matters the most is, the pastor equips and prepares her/himself to seek those youth, following the example of Jesus who searched for the one lost sheep (Luke 15:3-7), and address their hurt and pain. The pastor must provide opportunities for the youth to grow and develop their potential, establish meaningful relationships with others and experience God. The urgency of the moment calls for a research project of this focus to be needed now because too many youth who were formerly in the church have been lost to the streets, prison, the graveyard and/or the darkness of distress or depression. At this juncture in life, we cannot afford to lose anymore of our youth.

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[1] Andrew Sung Park. *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004) 3.

This paper is divided into five dimensions for discussion with a concluding chapter. Chapter one helps one to understand how events in the life of the researcher, who is also a pastor, evolved to lead to the formation, development and implementation of the research project. So often, pastors ignore the needs of youth, in particular young males, in their congregations, due to the fact that either they are not interested in the youths' hurt or pain, or pastors are ill-equipped and unprepared to deal with the horrors that youth experience today. So they are simply ignored. Or it could very well be that youth are not major contributors to support ministries in the church, and also families with children contribute less than seniors, who so often are better served by the pastors. The researcher believes it is more of the former than the latter. Chapter two highlights the voices of others who have discovered the significance of addressing one's hurt and pain, while at the same time, going through a process of release so that liberation can be achieved. This information helps and assures a pastor that young males can develop to their fullest potential, and that the concerned pastor can empower and encourage the growth and development of teenaged males facing serious life challenges. Chapter three expounds on theoretical foundations of hurt and pain from varied theological, biblical and historical perspectives, and their subsequent pathways toward liberation. Chapter four presents the methodology utilized to develop, integrate and evaluate the research project. As a result, a spiritual guide or a model of ministry for healing and wholeness of young males was constructed based on: (a) the pastor being required to be both seminarian-trained (pastoral ministry) and educated in pastoral care and counseling; (b) the Person-centered and Adlerian theoretical counseling approaches were employed; and (c) a variety of resource tools, both theological and practical, were used to secure a positive outcome. Chapter five

highlights the field experience where eighteen sessions were used to aid the youth to achieve "self-disclosure." Finally, chapter six ends with reflections, summary and conclusions concerning the research project.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

The "fullness of time" for Michael Anthony Henson was realized on Sunday, February 23, 2005. He found meaning, fulfillment and purpose on that day etched deep in his memory. His "spiritual development" had been one of victory, pain, joy, disappointment, accomplishment and tribulation. Yes, one can call his spiritual development "one heck of a rollercoaster ride."

In February, 2005, the young minister, while living in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, received a telephone call from Bishop T. Larry Kirkland, the Presiding Prelate of the Ninth Episcopal District (the entire state of Alabama) of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The bishop's call was an invitation to relocate and take the pastorate of a church in turmoil and crisis. This church faced nearly a seventy thousand dollar ($70,000) lawsuit brought by [redacted] The membership was divided because of continuous changes in pastoral leadership, including three pastors in two years. Nevertheless, Michael agreed to accept the pastoral charge because he felt this is where God wanted his gifts, skills, talents and goodwill to be planted and exercised.

Michael was born in Columbus, Ohio, the second-born child, but the first-born son of Edwynn Joan Moton. He never knew his father. His mother had six children, including four boys and two girls. Their home was a single-parent family. They lived in a low income housing complex where many depended on welfare. His mother rarely stayed at home and spent the majority of her time at the home of an aunt, who lived several blocks down the street. Michael clearly remembered his mother constantly and consistently

telling him that he was the head of the household and responsible for the welfare of his siblings and the house, even though he was only five years of age. Nevertheless, Michael assumed the leadership role at home. That experience assisted in his developing an attitude of being fearless, protective and altruistic towards his family. For instance, he remembered that when his mother had been away from home, there were several burglary attempts. Those attempts were thwarted, due to his creativity and dauntlessness. On many occasions, the family did not have the basic necessities for survival. Consequently, Michael taught his brothers how to lie and steal in order to provide for the family. Education seemed to have some degree of importance in the life of his family. His mother indirectly stressed the importance of education. She did not assist her children in comprehending their lesson materials. Through a perverse process of strict discipline, the children were whipped for earning low grades. Despite those varied experiences and more, Michael was the man of the house and he felt at ease acting in that role.

Michael would never forget, however, that awful day of February 17, 1966, when he came home from school and faced an enigmatic spirit. A very strange and an eerie feeling engulfed him. An ominous spirit so dense and dark was prevalent in the home's atmosphere that one could cut it with a knife. As he entered the house, Michael noticed that there were several people present. Many of them he had never seen before. He knew his brothers were still out wandering in the neighborhood. So he ran through the house calling his sisters' names. When he ascended the stairs, Michael saw both of his sisters sitting on the upper stairwell, holding each other in their arms, and eyes filled with tears. He asked them, "What's going on? And, who are all those people downstairs?" His older sister replied, "Mummy is dead, can you believe it! She's gone forever, and those people

downstairs are from the funeral home." Shock gripped him totally. Filled with mixed emotions, Michael wanted to cry, but could not. He had to be the leader and a viable source of strength for his sisters and brothers as the man of the house. This was a very traumatic period for him especially since he did not know how to respond. Inwardly, he fought back the tears but outwardly Michael was determined to be an emblem of resolve and strength. Tears were not on the agenda.

At the funeral service, Michael quietly broke down into tears. As he looked face to face into his mother's casket, Michael saw her beauty and youth. He slightly understood some of her difficulties and struggles she faced which included raising a family, finding a meaningful relationship with her family and a man, and being accepted. Michael's mother was twenty-nine years of age at the time of her death, caused by hypertension and double pneumonia. Moreover, Michael felt bitter inside because societal circumstances did not allow him and his mother to share their love with each other.

Michael now realizes as he reflected on his mother's death that it had a tremendous impact on him and played a significant role in his life, especially in terms of relationships with women. His mother rarely showed affection towards him and he did not show much towards others either. The last time that he saw her alive, she said to him, "I will see you later." Her death, however, prevented her from keeping this promise. She never saw him later. As a result, the issues of trust, and loss and abandonment frequently arose within him. Michael's mother's death truly affected his relationship with women. Even though Michael did not know this then, but would discover later in his mid-twenties, he could not develop or sustain a meaningful relationship with women for more than six months because those issues always haunted him. Outside of the women in his family and close

inner circle, Michael did not value their thoughts, words or deeds. Quite frankly, he did not want to be hurt again by a woman. One day, Michael was delivered from his negative interactions with women and liberated to a positive relationship with them. For Michael, this discovery eventually led to a resolution and healing over the hurt and pain of his mother's death, during his participation in a Clinical Pastoral Education program, in the year of 1984, as a Chaplain at the Washington Hospital Center, in Washington, D.C.

As he also experienced the traumatic reality of possible adoption, Michael encountered God in a way he had never felt before. God saw fit to rescue his family from the paralyzing winds of separation, while he was lost in a wilderness of fear and uncertainty. God touched the hearts of two of the greatest people in the universe, Elders' Benjamin Conley and his wife, Rosabelle. Despite the Conleys' being legally his foster parents, Michael refers to them as "his parents" because they established and provided him with a family structure and the benefits of love that he missed in his earlier life. In addition to adopting six children, the Conleys' already had a daughter, Gwen, who was several years older.

His parents' not only taught them life's virtues such as honesty, hard work, discipline and compassion, but also his mother was perceptive to note that "the component of love" was missing from the prior experience of her children's lives. Michael can still hear her voice euphonically declare, "I may not be able to make all of you love each other, but as long as you are under this roof, you will act like it."

Unbeknown to Michael, he had begun his faith journey. As a child, there were many things that confused him such as his mother's untimely death and his entire family's

adoption by a wonderful family. Here he started to understand that "God knows best" as many recited at the funeral service.

Another event that affected Michael's thought and spiritual development was his call to the ministry. His call to the ministry occurred in May, 1974, at Saint Mark AMEC where his first female mentor, Reverend Louise Harris, presided as Pastor. Since he was not limited to denominational barriers and wanted to do God's will, this researcher transferred his membership from a Baptist church to this small church. His brothers did likewise.

When he reached his senior year of high school, Michael decided to go to college since his parents often encouraged him to do so. While in high school, Michael received numerous honors and awards, and over fifty letters from colleges and universities requesting that he attend their institution and play football. Eventually, through constant prayers and fasting, he selected Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana. Michael not only had high expectations, but also wanted to achieve success for himself. He wanted to graduate to show his parents that their pains, struggles and persistent prayers were not in vain. Through the college years, he cherished the words his mother said to him as she departed Earlham College, "Son, no matter what happens as you venture on the road of life remember, Poppa and I will always love you and as long as we live, you have a roof to come under." Those words of devotion encouraged and sustained him through his venture at Earlham College. In June, 1979, Michael graduated from Earlham College and obtained a Bachelor's of Arts degree in Human Development and Social Relations.

A couple of years later, he also received a letter of admittance from American University in Washington, D. C., to the criminal law graduate program. As much as he

wanted to stay at home in Columbus, Ohio, something seemed to direct him to accept this invitation to study at American University. With great deliberation and little preparation to relocate, Michael decided to heed to that inner voice, and to stretch out on faith, despite his uncertainties. On January 2, 1981, as he was in route from Columbus, Ohio to Fairfax, Virginia (located in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area), Michael began to reminisce and take inventory of where he had come from in the past and where he was going in the future.

While in the area for almost a year, Michael went through financial crisis that affected his housing arrangement, transportation and schooling. As a result, he found employment at Georgetown University as a Campus Police Officer, and a few months later, as an elementary school substitute teacher. He also followed the advice of his presiding elder to work under the mentoring of Rev. Robert L. Pruitt, Pastor of Metropolitan AMEC in Washington, D.C. Michael discontinued his course of study at American University to devote full time and attention to the ministry, and enrolled at Howard University's School of Divinity. A joyous moment for him was in October, 1982 when he was ordained as an itinerant elder in the AMEC. Even though Michael was not a pastor, the ordination gave him the full rights and privileges of a clergy and made him also eligible to be a pastor.

After graduating from Howard University's Divinity School in May, 1985, with a Master of Divinity degree, Michael decided to pursue an advanced Master's degree. Michael, surprisingly to himself, had been accepted at both Yale and Harvard Universities Divinity Schools, respectively. He chose Yale Divinity School because the students addressed their theology and spirituality from the heart (service to others), rather than from the head (academic accomplishments).

Despite his success at Yale, Michael found himself ambushed by an obstacle. Dr. Lettie Russell, one of his advisors, (with Dr. Cornel West as the other), was not satisfied or impressed with a rough draft of his master's thesis. There was a little over a month until graduation, and it would take an act of God to complete the master's thesis by that time. He had always been an enabler in his family and one whom most people, who had problems, sought him for solutions. But now, who could rescue him? Just as he had been confronted with adversity previously, Michael turned to his spiritual strengths to defeat a mindset plagued with thoughts of suicide, failure and alienation. Michael depended upon the remembrance of his parents' love, prayers, songs and scriptures as sources to bring him through his challenges. For Michael, God's presence could be felt and victory was imminent. In the final analysis, three readers, including Dr. Lettie Russell, approved the researcher's master's thesis, his class selected him to be the flag bearer (which was a high honor), and he graduated from Yale Divinity School on time in 1987.

In the spring semester of 1988, Michael matriculated to Boston University's Doctor of Theology degree program. The primary reason he went to this academic institution is that Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was its most noted alumnus and his hero. Nevertheless, Boston University proved to be a wilderness experience, which was a strange period of stagnation, meaninglessness and self-searching. By the spring semester of 2001, Michael resigned from the doctoral program, after being "all but dissertation". This thirteen year period of theological studies had been one of the worst experiences in his life, primarily due to the fact that there had been very little academic accomplishment, social growth, intellectual advancement or spiritual development. What a profound, painful and pathetic wilderness experience, a period he would like to erase from his life.

Michael returned to Washington, D.C., in 1992, and co-founded a successful basketball ministry for youth and men (until 2006), as a response to Washington, D.C.'s infamous title as the "Murder Capitol of America" for several years.

Upon reflection, the experiences that have impacted and acted as a guidepost for Michael's life had been the healing over the loss of his mother and the call to the ministry. From his context, the term "ministry" in his perspective had a myopic approach and referred strictly to the pastoral ministry, and the pastor served as the focal point of ministry for a parishioner's needs. And another reason Michael pursued academic excellence is because his parents encouraged him to do so. But with a caveat added, his mother would often say "always remember that the Holy Spirit is the True Teacher". Michael understood his "calling" in this expanded notion of ministry, and pursued with passion "to study to show thyself approved unto God." So real was his call to the ministry, the researcher was determined to be a pastor somewhere, even if he had to make circumstances happen for himself and join another denomination. This is exactly what he did. For over a decade, Michael had submitted applications and made inquiries for pastoral positions to various denominations across the United Stated including Baptist, Disciples of Christ, Presbyterians, United Church of Christ and the United Methodist. The primary reason he attempted to abandon the African Methodist Episcopal Church was because there were at least sixty itinerant elders also waiting in front of him to secure a church in an area where attrition in the pulpit was rare.

After being frustrated with the pastoral appointment process, and not being able to secure a pulpit in the AMEC, Michael solicited the prayers and advice of his parents. For almost a year, after speaking with his parents, Michael's prayers for a pastoral

appointment were answered in February, 2005, when Bishop T. Larry Kirkland assigned him to Ward Chapel AMEC in Selma, Alabama. Michael had finally found meaning, fulfillment and purpose in pastoral ministry as well as in his life because this is where he believed God wanted him to serve. Michael also firmly believed that he had been healed of the hurt and pain of his mother's death. During his spiritual journey of faith, Michael now realized that God had indeed been involved in his life where "…all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28, NKJV). As this chapter of Michael's life came to a close, he continued the spiritual journey of faith where life was filled with both possibilities and challenges.

The Surrounding Community and Grady-Madison AMEC

Presently, Madison is the eleventh largest city in Alabama and the fastest growing suburb of Huntsville, located in the northern region. Very simply, it was the fastest growing city in Alabama. Moreover, Madison was the community as well as the place where the church was located for the context of our research project. Here is further information on the quality of life in Madison at the time of our study.

As it related to social relations, in 1980, Madison had a population of nearly 4,000 residents. By 2008, the population had grown almost ten times to a little over 38,000 residents. Almost 24,000 of the town's residents were between the ages of 19-64.[1] The

[1] http://www.ci.Madison.AL.US\Demographics.html. 1

median age was 34 years.[2] Of the 11,143 households, nearly 43% children had been under the age of 18 living with their parents, nearly 60% were married couples, nearly 10% were single female headed households, and nearly 28% were non-families (singles).[3] Other demographics of Madison revealed that the racial make-up had been nearly 80% white, 13% African Americans, 4% Asians, and 2.3% Hispanic.[4]

As it related to education, the public school system commenced in 1997, and presently serves 8,000 youth in six elementary schools, two middle schools, one senior high school and several private schools.[5] The senior high school graduation rate among adults and those who had a high school diploma were nearly 95%. In addition, 52% of the adult population had a bachelor's degree, and adults with a graduate or professional degree was nearly 17%.[6] Several universities and colleges were a few miles away from Madison such as Alabama A & M, University of Alabama at Huntsville, Faulkner University, Calhoun Community College, Oakwood College and Virginia College. This demographic information is both pertinent and phenomenal because almost forty years ago education in the State of Alabama had not been presented as an opportunity for African Americans.

As an illustration of this fact, the context of our study is situated in a historical setting where the lines of demarcation from the past to the present are as clear as black is to white. In the early sixties, during his inaugural speech, George Wallace shouted and prophesized these words from the steps of the University of Alabama, "I draw the line in

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[2] http://en.wikipedia.org\wiki\Madison,_Alabama. 3.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid. 2.

[6] http://www.ci.Madison.Al.US\Demographics.html 1.

the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny, and I say segregation today, segregation tomorrow, and segregation forever." In other words, his state of mind and agenda was to preserve the Southern way of life, which was segregation. Governor Wallace had emerged to leadership from a backdrop where the State of Alabama once succeeded from the Union in 1860, and rose from among its rank of states to become the "Cradle of the Confederacy", and elected its first president, Jefferson Davis. During their respective periods, slavery and segregation appeared to be formidable institutions that would be in existence for eternally. But now, times had really changed.

As it related to the economy, the medium household income was $105, 000 a year and nearly 60% of residents were employed in managerial/professional jobs.[7] The unemployment rate in Madison was 3.4%, in comparison to the national average of 9.5%.[8] About 4.4 % of families and 5.8% of the population lived below the poverty line, in comparison to the national average that was 12.6%.[9] The city's largest employer was Intergraph, a computer equipment company, along with Cummings Research Park, NASA Marshall Flight Center and Red Stone Arsenal, a military related agency. There were also employment opportunities available at the universities and colleges. Most of the businesses, however, were retail stores followed by restaurants.[10]

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[7] Ibid

[8] CNNMoney.com

[9] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Korea

[10] http://en.wikipedia.org\wiki\Madison,_Alabama. 2.

As it related to politics, the residents had taken advantage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The government of Madison was comprised of a white male mayor, an African American female city council woman and five white male council members. Additionally, the Civil Rights Act of 1968 subsequently provided for open housing that led diverse residents to live in an integrated community.

And as it related to transportation, the Huntsville International Airport, a Rail Cargo Center and a Greyhound bus line were only a few miles away from Madison.

Finally, in a development of an overview of the city of Madison, it must be noted that this fast growing city was striving to be an American "melting pot" that functioned on a level playing field and provided its residents with plentiful opportunities, numerous goods and public services. Forty years ago, to this present time, the residue of slavery and segregation, for the most part, appears to be eradicated in the city of Madison. Slavery and segregation were twin evils that sought to destroy African Americans, their families and communities. The black church and black religion, however, overthrew those institutions of evil through violent and non-violent protests. For the past forty years, in the arena of social relations, Madison had become culturally diverse, family oriented and generationally interactive. For the past forty years, in the arena of education, Madison placed a high premium and value on education, and provided a variety of educational alternatives for all persons. For the past forty years, in the arena of economy, the economy itself involved adequate employment opportunities at the federal, state and county governments, and private industry, and other employment opportunities were available in institutions of higher learning. For the past forty years, in the arena of politics, Madison chose to be a part of and to participate in the democratic process

through legislative decisions and community actions to improve the quality of life for its residents. And for the past forty years, in the arena of transportation, Madison became an international highway for prospective persons either to live or commute to do business in the area. From this contextual analysis of Madison as a city, one could understand that the city was attractive, expansive and afforded favorable amenities as an area of interest.

Out of this context, the facts include the birth of Grady-Madison African Methodist Episcopal Church. In October, 1998, at the North Alabama Annual Conference held in Huntsville, the Presiding Elder, Reverend Eddie Blankinship, considered assigning Reverend William Jackson, who had recently relocated from Minneapolis, to a church in his district. However, the Presiding Prelate, Bishop Z. L.Grady, had an inspired idea. Bishop Grady assigned Rev. Jackson to start a mission church in the city of Madison. Without established guidelines, Rev. Jackson proceeded to create a new church as he was instructed. A location was developed at 911-D Miller Boulevard, which included pews, pulpit and AMEC paraphernalia. Rev. Jackson, together with his wife, and a small band of family members and other supporters united to begin the new ministry. They held Sunday service for the first time on January 10, 1999. As the number of congregants grew, the membership began to seek to purchase a church building. After overcoming many stumbling blocks, the congregation worshipped for the first time on the first Sunday of September, 2004 in her new location, at 129 Gooch Lane, where the church currently stands. January 9, 2005, was a glorious day in the church's history. The church not only celebrated her sixth anniversary, but also dedicated its cornerstone.

The 2006–2007 Annual Conference found Grady-Madison AMEC at a crossroad in her brief history. As her eighth anniversary was celebrated, Reverend William Jackson

retired. The new pastor called was Reverend Michael A. Henson. Upon his initial arrival to Grady-Madison AMEC, he observed that majority of the churches that lined Hughes Road and Wall Triana Highway (the main thoroughfares) included large edifices or mega churches with very impressive and intimidating structures. Grady-Madison AMEC was quite small in comparison. After being at Grady-Madison for only a few months, the new pastor discovered that majority of the fifty members, including about ten men, were spiritually malnourished, in that "they talked the talk, but did not walk that walk." Moreover, the majority of the church was also comprised of the previous pastor's family members and friends, and affiliate members from Saint John AMEC in nearby Huntsville. Some members also joined under Reverend Jackson's administration.

The relatively small number of youth and men immediately begged Michael's attention, particularly the paucity of young males. Michael wrestled with several questions: How to attract the attention and participation of young men, and allow them to become a vital part of the church's membership? What could be done to create a nurturing and caring environment in the church for those young males? Since they faced issues of brokenness, hurt and pain, how can healing and wholeness take place in the lives of those youth? How could those youth be placed on a track where they could pursue healing and wholeness, and then assist in the liberation of others? Michael envisioned a process of transformation for those young males where healing and wholeness would serve as instruments to replace hurt and pain, so that they could become agents of change that would be reflective of Christian values and virtues.

At A Juncture

The city of Madison demonstrated rapid growth and development in its infrastructure and religious institutions. Michael viewed the context of Grady-Madison AMEC, which was situated at the center of the city's growth explosion. He was optimistic that growth, in terms of spiritual development, financial stability and numerical outbursts would occur quite rapidly at Grady-Madison AMEC, juxtaposed to his experience, knowledge and passion for ministry, through the help of the Holy Spirit. But once in the pulpit, he discovered quite the contrary. This church appeared to remain anemic and oblivious to both her potential and what was occurring socially around her. For almost two years, he witnessed many single-parent African American families visit this congregation and would be amenable to join ranks at Grady-Madison AMEC and share in her vision, direction and care. Michael also felt that the church should not only be a house of prayer for all people, but also a place where the weak, worn and wounded were rescued. Nevertheless, a shortcoming of the church was the lack of a ministry to cultivate the character of the youth. Even more importantly, in his conversations with those prospective visitors, Michael observed that in majority of the cases, those women were mothers of adolescent and teenaged boys. Given that reality, he had made several appeals to the congregants to organize the Young People's Division to commence a ministry for the youth. Michael concluded and promoted that the membership could not assume that the youth who attended the worship services were capable of meeting the compelling challenges and cultural influences in their communities. Yet daily, those youth confronted peer pressure and other societal influences. In spite of his appeals for youth

advocates, the congregants permitted apathy and negative attitudes to prevail over their potential and promise.

Prior to Michael's matriculation at United Theological Seminary, he continuously prayed and tried to recruit potential members to work especially with the youth. When those alternatives did not occur in a timely manner, he took matters of serving the youth into his own hands. Michael began leaning towards instituting again a youth basketball ministry that he co-founded and managed, and had been organized and proved effective in the Washington, D. C. metropolitan area from August/1992 through August/2006. He had written a proposal and talked about a course of action with several churches and youth, and had established a target date to implement a youth basketball ministry in Madison, around the same time he had begun his doctoral studies at United Theological Seminary. Michael was inclined to make this basketball ministry a part of his doctoral research project. However, in spite of those efforts for a youth basketball ministry, through the academic program and rigorous requirements of United Theological Seminary, and compelling conversations with his mentor, Reverend Dr. Angela Washington challenged him to develop and initiate a program of healing and wholeness for those young males at Grady-Madison AMEC. Moreover, Dr. Washington played a key role to help him to discern the Holy Spirit's promptings from his own personal agenda. Through his submission to the will and way of God's Spirit, Michael was subsequently compelled to develop a research project that would enable, enrich and empower those youth, who experienced hurt and pain in their lives. This effort also could possibly be an asset not only for the church, but also for the community at large in particular, the school system and juvenile centers.

Again, the city of Madison continued to experience phenomenal growth, while at the same time the community showed signs of slowly experiencing big city social problems, in particular, increased juvenile delinquency. In some cases, those same young people who found themselves as offenders in the criminal justice system were some of the ones in those local churches who bore a double identity, the good and the bad. Furthermore, within several of the local churches, some of the adults complained about the attire, attitudes and associates of their youth; yet, they were slow in coming to the forefront to teach, guide and indoctrinate those youth with alternative ways of action, if at all. In addition, the congregants within the church walls could not assume that the youth who attended worship services Sunday after Sunday were capable of meeting the challenges of cultural influences, competitive value systems, peer pressure and problem-solving within their own communities. Those youth were at a crossroad to be productive rather than under-developed. Both, the local church and the family shared the responsibility and task for the healing and wholeness of their own youth through the transference of beliefs, values and common sense.

The researcher firmly believes one of the reasons Jesus spent, shared and simulated a variety of experiences with his disciples was to show them that the process of healing and wholeness begins first within themselves. These two elements, healing and wholeness, culminate in the belief and practice, "…You shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27, NKJV).

Since healing and wholeness are a process, and central terms to our study, it is imperative to investigate these terms for further clarification. The Greek word for "heal"

(θεραπευω) has little to do with medical treatment, but everything to do with power that dominates over demonic spirits or diseases/defects, regardless of their expression in such forms as the lame, the dumb, the blind, an issue of blood, or even the dead. The uniqueness or peculiarity of Jesus' ability to heal both demonic spirits and physical diseases/defects was through His Word and healing touch. The Word of God represents the coming of the Kingdom of God in a sinful world of suffering and separation from God. Jesus even commissioned his disciples, the apostles and every believer to exercise the same power to heal as he declared, "…he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father" (John 14:12, NKJV). So for the purpose of our research project, the definition of healing is a process of transformation where one is led to an awareness of the cause and effect of one's hurt and pain, whether past and/or present, by a person(s) or experience(s) so that that wounded person's thoughts and behaviors can be redirected. And the Greek word for "whole" (ὅλος) means a person must submit her/his will, work and way to a Divine power as Jesus Christ, so that service to others can be rendered (Matthew 25:32-45 and Luke 10:30-37). Moreover, wholeness involves a synergy between the divine and human so that the power of the Holy is made manifest in the world. So the definition of wholeness is the overcoming of one's own hurt and pain which leads to self-disclosure of purpose and meaning in one's life, so that one can use that hurt and pain, in the name of Jesus, to minister to the needs of others who are in crisis.

In short, healing and wholeness manifest themselves together through the liberation or transformation of a person's broken condition where change has been achieved, so that service to Jesus Christ and others can be rendered to usher in the Kingdom of God.

CHAPTER TWO

STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY MODEL

Reflecting on the historical context of the African American religious experience, Edward Wimberly in his work, *Pastoral Care in the Black Church,* builds a "...model of pastoral care that reflects the changing conditions in the black community and the black church." [1] Moreover, in a post-modern society, Wimberly notes the decentralization of the role of the pastor and support systems, both in the African American community as well as the church. Conversely, Wimberly designed a model for pastoral care and counseling of the African American tradition complimented by the utilization of elements from the behavioral sciences.

In a similar spirit, for the researcher, the pastor, in essence, must recapture the position, posture and practice as the one who is actively involved in the lives of congregants, and to sustain and guide the faithful to viable venues that can assist them to meet their needs and realize their potential. In addition, in our current times, the pastor must also be knowledgeable of pastoral ministry, and effective in pastoral care and counseling, so that the evidences of faith are made real and fully realized.

The researcher maintains that it is a necessity for pastors to perform the traditional role of sustaining and guiding the membership. While in seminary, most students focused on the popular and intellectual areas of specialization such as biblical studies, systematic theology and preaching/homiletics. The researcher, however, contends after two decades of ministering in a variety of churches in different cities that the most needed area of

[1] Edward Wimberly. *Pastoral Care in the Black Church.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1979) 71.

specialization of skills is in the discipline of pastoral care and counseling. Within local churches, people are literally hurting and wounded from the battle scars of life such as marital separation or failure, social alienation, a loss of purpose, physical and emotional abuse to enumerate a few, and are in need of resolution and recovery.

The two objectives of this study are the fostering of healing and wholeness that sometimes is found lacking both in the home and the community, but somehow they are expected to be found in the church. The Word of God seems to validate those expectations as articulated in the ministry of Jesus Christ when he observed the degenerating conditions of humanity in two episodes. On one occasion, Jesus and his disciples were eating with tax collectors and sinners, and the Pharisees raised objections to this relationship through a troubling question, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" (Matthew 9:11b, NKJV). Jesus responded to them and declared, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means:" I desire mercy and not sacrifice. For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance" (Matthew 9:12b-13, NKJV). On another occasion, later in the same day, when Jesus had been overwhelmed by the demands of people who wanted to be healed, he observed, "But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest"" (Matthew 9:36-38, NKJV).

Several years ago, while in attendance at Mount Olivet Baptist Church in Columbus, Ohio, Reverend Dr. Charles Booth stated this about the Christian church, "The church is

not a sanctuary for saints, but a hospital for sinners." Again, pastors today must be armed, prepared and ready to address the entire needs of the congregation, including the particular interests of young males who are floating, figuratively speaking, far from the safe and secured shores of the church.

Once the pastor establishes the role as a sustainer and guide who shepherds the flock, and has been prepared to provide pastoral ministry and pastoral care and counseling; the pastor must also be able to identify and address her/his own hurt and pain, so that those prior experiences can be used as effective tools in the ministry of healing others. In his work, *The Wounded Healer,* Henri Nouwen presents an exposition of the fragmented condition of humanity in a post-modern world. These conditions as a broken humanity find themselves also evident in the church. Nouwen goes on to suggest that the proper response of a minister to these fragmented conditions is,

> …the imitation of Christ does not mean to live a life like Christ, but to live your life as authentically as Christ lived his, then there are many ways and forms in which a man can be a Christian. The minister is the one who can make this search for authenticity possible, not by standing on the side as a neutral screen or an impartial observer, but as an articulate witness of Christ, who puts his own search at the disposal of others. This hospitality requires that the minister know where he stands and whom he stands for, but it also requires that he allow others to enter his life, come close to him and ask him how their lives connect with his.[2]

In short, the role of the pastor as it relates to congregants, who are wounded, is to create as Nouwen suggests "…ways in which the minister can make his own wounds available as a source of healing…[she/he] is called *The Wounded Healer.*"[3]

The review of literature demonstrates that youth can be affected by numerous interactions and exchanges that some adults would assume are only casual, blasé or

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[2] Henri Nouwen. *The Wounded Healer.* (Garden City, New York: Image Book, 1972) 99-100.

[3] Ibid. xvi.

normal. Youth experience different forms and expressions of grief and separation which sometimes lead to hurt and pain such as the divorce of parents, domestic violence, relocation to another geographical area, single-parenthood, transitioning from one school grade level to another or even death of someone close to enumerate a few of the challenges youth confront today. Within the local church, the pastor as well as the congregants must not assume that since youth are in the church and attend church regularly that everything is favorable or there is an absence of conflict in their lives.

Since youth are affected by their social environments and social systems, the role of the pastor must come to the forefront as pointed out by Howard Clinebell in his work, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, as he observes, "Pastoral counseling actually begins when the first contact is made by a person to seek help."[4] When youth experience hurt and pain, and these remain unresolved, the potential for destructive behavior becomes prevalent as indicated by Richard Exley in his book, *When You Loose Someone You Love,* "Because grief is so painful, you have probably been tempted to seek not only relief, but escape. Don't! While that reaction is not unusual, it is counter-productive. As painful as grief is, it is not a foe to be overcome, but a friend to be embraced. If you insist on thinking of your grief as an enemy, you will only delay the healing process."[5]

In spite of the penetrability of a youth's emotional and spiritual condition caused by hurt and pain, one must be cognizant that, "Young children get their understanding of life

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[4] Howard Clinebell. *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling,* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1984) 72.

[5] Richard Exley. *When You Loose Someone You Love,* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Honor Books, 1995) 36.

primarily through their senses, not through their intellect",[6] as Claudia L. Jewett notes in her book, *Helping Children Cope with Separation and Loss.* Moreover, Jewett examined the corollary of irresolvable hurt and pain of a youth this way,

> The [youth] who never become aware of his conflicting needs to hold on to what was and to let go, or who is not able to admit these needs to himself or to others, may avoid the pain that follows. The conflict that is buried is never resolved. It may carry itself into other areas of his life, making it difficult to begin anew, or it may fester, breaking forth later in life when more losses or yearnings are experienced.[7]

Andrew Sung Park in his book, *From Hurt to Healing,* cites the work of Kathy Wisdom, who conducted research on criminals that had inner conflict, or hurt and pain, that went unresolved as a result of abuse and/or neglect. Park's writes,

> The research clearly revealed that a victim of child physical abuse is prone to violence in later years and that victims of child neglect are more likely to surrender to later violent criminal behavior as well. Of all types of childhood maltreatment, physical abuse was the most likely to be linked to arrest for a violent crime later in life. The repetition of physical abuse by the abused is hard to understand, but it is an undeniable reality.[8]

Others have conducted research on the growth and development of young males who have been battered and beaten from the challenges of life, and have sought resolve from their hurt and pain. Two research studies come to the forefront with promise, yet they possibly have dire consequences if carried out to the nth degree from the researcher's viewpoint.

A 2008 research study formulated by the American Psychological Association Task Force on Resilience and Strength in Black Children and Adolescents entitled, "Resilience In African American Children and Adolescents: A Vision for Optimal Development."

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[6] Claudia Jewett, *Helping Children Cope with Separation and Loss,* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Common Press, 1982) 7.

[7] Ibid. 35.

[8] Andrew Sung Park. 2.

The Task Force had the responsibility to identify the "...factors that contribute to the healthy development of African American children (5-11 years old) and adolescents (12-21 years old)."[9] In this research study, the Task Force recognized that there are "at risk" or negative influences (i.e., academic underachievement, criminal justice system and family disruption), that affect the growth and development of youth, but they were kept at a minimal. The research study, however, chose to focus on "at promise" influences such as to maximize racial, ethnic and cultural elements within the African American communities for positive outcomes. The Task Force concluded its research study and maintained that African American children and adolescents will remain resilient and develop to their fullest potential based on the activation and placement of those protective components of resilience, which are developmental in the forms of self-identity, emotional, social, cognitive and physical health.

Another research study, "Measuring the Effectiveness of an Afrocentric Male Mentoring Program with Adolescent African American Males" conducted by Shelby Thomas Wyatt in 2000 also focused on the growth and development of young African American males. Rather than having a counseling arrangement similar to our research project, Wyatt chose to examine the impact and relationship of an Afrocentric male mentoring program on adolescent African American males by promoting the principles of the Nguzo Saba or the Seven Principles of Kwanzaa. Moreover, the research study also sought to look at the impact of the mentoring program on self-concept, responsibility to the community and academic achievement of young African American males. This research study lasted for six months. The primary conclusion drawn from this research

[9] The Task Force on Resilience and Strength in Black Children and Adolescence Executive Summary Report, 2009. American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C. 1.

study was that the mentoring program had a tremendous impact on self-concept in a positive manner.

For this researcher, both of these research studies have several shortcomings. First, a deficit results because of its singular focus on the secular or practical worldview at the exclusion of a theological perspective. A second shortcoming was its exclusion of the significance and role the church plays in the lives of youth, both individually and communally. The tragedy of excluding the church from the lives of youth, whether in the home or community, is a society marred in moral depravity and decay, impersonal and impractical relationships, and the lack of reliance and recognition of an Ultimate Source that adds meaning, purpose and fulfillment to one's life. And a third shortcoming is that these research studies are contrary to the African American religious tradition and experience, in that they leave out the impact of the religious-spirituality dimensions in African American life and its maintenance on social relationships. African American church history significantly involves reaching "the promise land" through the factor of faith as a cardinal element of African American history. In short, these research studies fail to acknowledge that people are not only made up of a body and mind but they also have a soul and spirit that increases life.

Now on the other side, two other studies focused on the religious-spiritual dimension at the expense of the secular or practical aspects which offer more positive conclusions, but also questionable benefits. Byron R. Johnson, Director of the Center for Research on Religion and Urban Civil Society, conducted a study entitled, "The Role of African-American Churches in Reducing Crime Among Black Youth." He tested, "the hypothesis that the religious involvement of African American youth significantly shields them from

the deleterious effects of neighborhood disorder and decay on youth crime."[10] Two conclusions are evident in this work and they include: (a) criminal behavior among black youth was partially mediated by the youth's religious involvement, and (b) a youth's involvement in a religious institution did significantly act as a guide to reduce crime.[11]

In his book, *The Successful Development of African American Males,* Dr. Darryl Tukufu focuses on six elements that work together for the growth and development of young African American males include: (1) religious, spiritual and ideological orientation; (2) positive mental attitude; (3) the Nguzo Saba or the Seven Principles of Kwanzaa; (4) African American culture and history; (5) social development; and (6) social capacity. Dr. Tukufu not only constructs a guide for youth growth and development, but also presents twenty-four directives that lead a male to be a productive citizen. Although his book is inspirational and informative, one glaring shortcoming is his promotion of the Nguzo Saba or the Seven Principles of Kwanzaa. Dr. Maulana Karenga, the founder of these seven principles, argues for a humanistic approach as well as a "death of God" theory where God is absent and void in the lives of God's people. Therefore, Dr. Tukufu's conclusions for the growth and development in the lives of young African American males are unpredictable and could reap uncertain consequences.

The challenge for the church is to be aware that today is a new day that requires a new way to address the issues affecting youth who are wounded by hurt and pain. For our youths' sake, healing and wholeness must become a priority within the church. In his work, *From Hurt to Healing,* Andrew Sung Park argues that healing comes in three

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[10] Byron R. Johnson. Center for Research and Urban Civil Society. (http://www.manhattan institute.org) 1.

[11] Ibid.

aspects as he maintains,

> Healing includes three aspects. First, it occurs when victims allow the healing stream of the Spirit to flow through them. By letting the Spirit work through them, victims become cleansed from han (Korean term for hurt and pain) and experience healing, a gift of God. This in turn transforms them into agents of grace in healing others. Second, healing occurs through self-denial. This involves denying distorted self-images and restoring the image of God to them. Third, as wounded healers they partake in transforming the collective or structural level of han, making the fragmentary world whole.[12]

For the researcher, Park's conclusions are not enough. He appears to place the onus for liberation on the inner strength of the individual, who already suffers from hurt and pain, rather than to solicit the support and efforts of the pastor, community of faith and society. The Word of God teaches us that, "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:17, NKJV).

An African proverb declares that, "It takes a village to raise a child." This notion is relevant to a discussion on healing and wholeness. As the primary facilitator of an evaluation team, the pastor creates an environment of trust and care with the youth through a variety of interactions and exchanges such as through worship services, youth activities, attending school functions, and one-on-one conversations. These varied relationships are of utmost significance because it assists in the introduction of other members possibly to the evaluation team. Moreover, an evaluation team could possibly consists of ministers, counselors, psychologists, educators, business persons, congregants, parents and/or significant other adults who are key variables in the process of healing and wholeness, and who can help empower and encourage youth as they share their related experiences, both the importance and advantage of overcoming one's hurt and pain to others. The evaluation team will also direct youth to be viable participants in the Body of

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[12] Andrew Sung Park, *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 2004) 131-132.

Christ as well as at home and in the community.

The researcher will attempt to show that through the pastoral ministry and pastoral care and counseling of the pastor, the involvement of an evaluation team, and the adoption of behavioral sciences counseling approaches for evaluation, teaching and training, all intentionally orchestrated by the pastor will enable youth to move through the destruction caused by hurt and pain to the reconstruction made possible only by healing and wholeness.

Our society has become more complex and the number of young persons at risk has steadily increased. Too many of the young lack the abilities, resources and attitude to cope with their challenges and crisis. Even within the African American church today, the pastor must utilize pastoral care and counseling skills and realize that she/he "...cannot rely on his or her office to command leadership in the black church as in the past...There needs to be a bridge between past models and present realities in black pastoral care."[13]

The bridge that best serves to compliment our research project in pastoral care and counseling is the Person-centered and Adlerian theoretical counseling approaches, come from the behavioral sciences. Several of the strengths of the Person-centered and Adlerian approaches include the following: (a) their applicability to a wide range of human problems; (b) their practicality and effectiveness among lay persons and the use of psychology; (c) their emphasis on the integrity, dignity and respect of persons, regardless of differences; (d) their views of human personalities that when the right conditions are provided, then a person can be self-directed and growth oriented; (e) Adlerian use of birth

[13] Wimberly. 76.

order; and (f) their short-term approach for therapy that would lend themselves as helpful to our research project so that youth try to make improvements in their lives.

The Person-centered and Adlerian theoretical counseling approaches appear to be doable, non-offensive and effective in our spiritual guide for healing and wholeness. Our definition for healing means to overcome a hurtful and painful experience that leads to the uplift of human personality and a pursuit of healthy relationships. Wholeness is defined as a person who has overcome a "deep wound (han)," [14] and now becomes a "wounded healer" [15] to heal others of their own hurt and pain.

Carl Rogers, the founder of the Person-centered approach, contends,

> The change process is stimulated when counselors or therapists provides the core conditions of genuineness, acceptance and caring, and empathic understanding. Change takes place as clients perceive these conditions and begin exploring and testing new thoughts and behaviors that are more in line with their positive, growth-oriented nature. This exploration, testing, and learning lead clients to increase their trust in their organism's ability to think and act in a wider variety of circumstances.[16]

The literature review highlights an overview of young males who are in need of a spiritual guide for healing and wholeness, which is comprised of a trained pastor, who takes the lead in this process, along with laypersons and professionals, and uses them alongside and with techniques from the behavioral sciences, in this research project the Person-centered and Adlerian theoretical approaches.

A Road Towards Healing and Wholeness

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[14] Park. 3.

[15] Nouwen. xvi.

[16] David Capuzzi & Douglas R. Gross. *Counseling and Psychotherapy: Theories and Interventions,* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall, 2007) 199-200.

The objectives of this research project are to develop a spiritual guide or a model of ministry for healing and wholeness that will involve and help young males to evolve with better outcomes and: (a) to create a safe-haven where youth can dialogue about their hurt and pain; (b) to present youth with alternatives to deal with their emotional wounds and spiritual conflicts; and (c) to empower and encourage the youth to be members of the Body of Christ and eventually become equipped to help others. We can never forget that the Christian faith is not about one's own salvation, but also to save the neighbor as well. This faith contains the requirement of being a brother (sister)'s keeper. The expected outcome of the research project is to demonstrate the utility of a spiritual guide for healing and wholeness through a threefold process. First, a trained clergyperson (in pastoral ministry and pastoral care and counseling) will lead and orchestrate the effort in collaboration with an evaluation team of laypersons, professionals and other talented adults. Second, the adoption of a counseling approach or approaches from the behavioral sciences also serve as a bridge to help the participants reconcile differences within themselves, and then to bond with family, peers and/or church members. And third, these youth will be empowered and encouraged to be change agents among other youths who have similar concerns and needs, and come from similar cultural and social background and challenges. It is a research project where each who is helped now becomes obligated to reach back to help another. Any person made strong is obligated to help the weak and the wounded become healers. The previously broken can become agents of healing once their own conflicts are resolved and they have healed.

Methodology and Strategy

Since the operative terms in this proposed research project are "healing and wholeness," the nature of this effort commands the use of two research methods, the general research method and the qualitative research method. First, the general research method provides our proposed research project with resource tools that are descriptive, analytical, historical and expository. This research method is relevant to our discussions about the causes and effects of the youth with "hurt and pain," and who relate to the purpose of this ministry through the assets from both pastoral care and counseling and the behavioral sciences. This proposed research project took advantage of telephone conversations, personal interviews, written correspondence, and the use of the Internet.

Second, the qualitative research method will take place in the fellowship hall at Grady-Madison AMEC and a public library where a variety of resource tools such as Bible studies, one-on-one interviews, workshops, movies, group therapy, rap sessions, panel discussions and questionnaires were conducted. The role of the researcher will be involve the following eight elements: (a) to formulate a presentation that will serve as an icebreaker to make the participants feel comfortable with the researcher as well as the other participants; (b) to chose select scriptures for Bible study with related experiences of youth in the Bible and inform their paths toward healing and wholeness (the goal is to show the youth how God works in human history and requires us to reconcile ourselves to each other and God); (c) to engage the participants in an informal one-on-one dialogue with the evaluation team; (d) to present workshops, lecturers and other activities through the use of counselors, educators, laypersons, therapists, and ministers (the goal is for these persons to help facilitate the concepts of liberation), who will stress the importance and the process for the deconstruction of their "hurt and pain" to the reconstruction

through "healing and wholeness"; (e) to gain the participants' understanding of self, family, community, church and God; (f) to code central themes that pulsates from the participants responses from the resource tools; (g) to learn from the participants through questionnaires and feedback their assessment of the research project, its strengths and needs for improvement; and (h) to use an interpretive analysis of the data to draw conclusions.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Theological Foundations

In the formation of our spiritual guide or model of ministry for healing and wholeness, we will use a combination of the theological, biblical and historical foundations as an avenue to introduce the research project. (Note: all scriptural references in this chapter will come from the New King James Version)

In talking about "healing" and "wholeness" as they relate to a theological foundation, we will look at them as a backdrop to the creation story. First, let us look at healing. Even though our study deals with "healing," nowhere in the beginning of the creation story does this concept seem to be applicable as a theological concept. Several of the biblical themes, however, that pulsate from the creation story are unity, oneness, perfection, wellness, relationship, fullness, harmony and completeness. These are some of the nomenclature that characterizes the beginning of creation, and categorizes the decency and order that existed, and was expected to continue by God as outlined by the author of Genesis in Chapter one.

Let us briefly explore the creation story to observe some of the major themes that come to the forefront. For instance, the Triune God, also referred to as "Us" (Gen. 1:26), demonstrates the unity and oneness of the Godhead, who created the heavens and the earth, and everything in it. At the climax of the creation story, the Triune God created humanity, both male and female (1:27, 2:18 and 21-23), in God's own image and likeness, to be stewards of the earth (1:28-30, 2:15 and 19-20, and 3:20), and to be

involved in an intimate relationship with each other as well as with the Triune God through service, obedience and responsibility. Periodically, the Triune God reviewed the handiwork of God's hand and concluded, "Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed that it was very good" (1:31).

And again, the Triune God shows that unity, oneness, fellowship and relationships were very significant entities within the creation story when the author of Genesis highlights the crowning moment of a marital union between humanity and declares, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (2:24). So after the completion of six days of work, the Triune God "…ended His work which He had done, and He rested…Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made" (2:2-3). What a wonderful story! The creation story had a perfect beginning composed of serenity, harmony and tranquility, a world without conflict and controversy.

The creation story, however, like so many other stories had an unsuspecting and unassuming plot that changed profoundly the course of human nature and the human condition. It also involves the addition of new words to our vocabulary to describe human existence including: grief, hurt, pain, brokenness, separation, disobedience, destruction and death. The plot thickens and changes the status of decency and order that previously existed in creation. Then we witness the disobedience of Adam and Eve to the Triune God, and their subsequent punishment and dismissal from the Garden of Eden (3:16-24). And as a result of those incidences of disobedience, humanity suffers from a spiritual

birth defect as best described by the Psalmist, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51:5).

At this juncture, for our study, this is where the terms "healing" and "wholeness" becomes necessary and applicable for human nature and the human condition. Our definition for healing means to be liberated from a painful and hurtful experience, which also leads to the uplift of human personality and a pursuit of healthy relationships. Wholeness is defined as a person who has been liberated from her/his hurt and pain, and now becomes a "wounded healer" to help heal others from their own hurt and pain.

In creating the heavens, the earth and humanity through mere words, the Triune God's purpose in the creative process had been centered on the establishment of relationships, interactions and involvement with others as well as with the Triune God. One of the premier variables that come to the forefront in the creative process to describe the essence of the Triune God is unity in relationship. The notion of unity also is at the core of the Godhead as best expressed by the Apostle John who observes, "For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word (who is Jesus Christ, see John 1:1-5 and 14-18), and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one" (1 John 5:7). Furthermore, in the creative process, the Triune God ordained and mandated that all of creation be blessed, fruitful and multiply; and not merely to exist independently of each other. Nevertheless, through the disobedience to God by humanity, the creative process became subject to a deadening, destructive and debilitating condition where hurt and pain became the order of the times and threatened God's creation.

Another analogy that highlights the critical nature of the human condition as a result of the Fall of humanity in the Garden of Eden is the formation of the three dimensions of

human existence — birth, death and dialectic. Death is an inescapable and democratic reality that impacts everyone. Rich and poor people die, black and white people die, good and bad people die - all people must face the inevitable reality of death. At the opposite side of death is birth. Birth is to be initiated into the process of life and death. To be born means to move from a non-being, and eventually, at some appointed time in history, to return unto eternity. There is a third dimension of human existence, which is located between these two pillars of birth and death, and it involves "the Christian dialectic of human nature and human history."[1] This dialectic is inextricably intertwined to the other, and defines the human condition as both promising and painful,

> "Human beings possess the capacity to change their conditions and themselves, but not to perfect either their conditions or themselves. Human history dooms human beings to problem and problematic, obstacles and obstruction, to relative achievements and relative accomplishments."[2]

Nonetheless, because of the Triune God's love and care for creation, these expressions led to the dispensation of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit into human nature and human history to magnify further Their work, will and way among humanity. Thanks be to God through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who had victory over death and the grave, and the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, humanity has been liberated and afforded the opportunity to fulfill a promise by Jesus Christ "…I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10b)

Biblical Foundations

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[1] Cornel West, *Prophesy Deliverance*, (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: West Minister Press, 1982)17.

[2] Ibid.

Throughout the biblical literature, the family held a prestigious, preeminent and prominent standing within the community. Regardless of perilous circumstances surrounding and/or within the family structure, the family sometimes was able to find a way to forge to the forefront and survive through healing and wholeness. For instance, after God created the heavens and the earth, as well as the man Adam, the Lord God observed and concluded that, "…It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him" (Gen. 2:18). The Word of God goes on to say in the creation of a family, "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam,…and He took one of His ribs,…Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man" (2:21-22). Even after the Fall in the Garden of Eden, along with the subsequent punishments of Adam and Eve (3:16-24), the Word of God illustrates that the family unit remained in tact, "Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain,…Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel" (4:1a-2a). God is for families and creates families.

Centuries later, God again looked over God's creation and witnessed the wickedness and devastation within the human condition. In God's judgment, God decided to wipe the slate clean and even regretted creating humanity,

> Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the Lord said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them" (Gen. 6:5-7).

But even in God's anger that gave way to the construction of Noah's Ark, God had already endorsed and set a precedence, in both the Adam and Eve, and Cain and Abel stories, for the maintenance of the family by saving Noah and his family and other

creatures of every kind. The creation story subsequently saw the family as the chief cornerstone for the development and building of the community (7:1).

Since the family has an impact on the psychology of society, in particular young people, the biblical literature is replete with illustrations of family members, who had young males that lacked the ability to cope with the stresses, pressures and uncertainties of life within the home and community. One could argue that Cain's conduct or misconduct could be an appendage from elements that trace to his parent's, Adam and Eve, disobedience to God and their subsequent dismissal from the Garden of Eden. For Abel, God accepted and respected his offering as indicated in Hebrews 11:4, "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks." On the contrary, Cain's offering was not respected by God (Gen. 4:5). Since God is just and merciful, and no respecter of person (Mt.5:45 and Acts 10:34), God advised Cain as to what he must do to give God a favorable and acceptable offering (Gen. 4:6-7). Cain, however, inherited a spiritual defect that all of humanity possesses, as a direct result of his parents' disobedience to God in the Garden of Eden, as best described by the Psalmist, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me "(Ps 51:5). So Cain rebelled against God, failed to adhere to God's admonition, and he opted to hold onto a spirit and attitude that caused him wroth and made his countenance fall (Gen. 4:5). And in a similar spirit as his parents, Adam and Eve, Cain became a by-product of a concept known as a "generational curse." Cain rose up and killed his brother Abel, and responded to God's question, in kind as his parents, with amnesia, blame and irresponsibility (compare Gen. 3:9-13 to 4:9-10).

Another family also had a sibling rivalry, involving Abraham and Sarah's grandsons, Esau and Jacob. The conduct of these children's parents, Isaac and Rebekah, demonstrate that their practice of poor parenting fostered a hostile environment by favoring one son over the other. The story observed, "And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob" (Gen. 25:28). It almost seems scandalous that Rebekah by naming one of the sons, Jacob, which means deceiver, cheater and supplanter, knew which son she would favor. God told her in private, before the sons were born that her sons represented two nations and that the older son would serve the youngest. The biblical writer added, "And the Lord said to her: Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger" (Gen. 25:23).

Esau and Jacob were by-products of their own home environment. For instance, both sons stayed closely to and learned from the parent who favored him. Both of their parents were deceivers. One instance that the biblical literature highlights is when there was a famine in the land and Isaac went to the land of Gerar, where Abimelech, King of the Philistines, presided. While in the land, other men came to Isaac and made several inquires about his wife. Fearing for their safety, Isaac and Rebekah conspired like Isaac's parents; Abram and Sarai, when they had gone down to Egypt, and Abram told the Egyptians that Sarai was his sister (compare Gen.12: 10-20 to 26:1-11). In a similar manner, Isaac and Rebekah responded in kind when they were in the land of Gerar, and Isaac passed off Rebekah as if she were his sister. This same kind of trickery and deceit was mastered by Jacob as he stole his brother's Esau's birthright (Gen. 25:29-34), and further taught and demonstrated by his mother, Rebekah, as Jacob also stole his brother's

blessing (Gen. 27:1-40). In short, Esau and Jacob were raised in a hostile environment that nurtured brokenness, hurt, pain, mistrust and deceit that transferred from their parents to themselves.

The biblical literature continued to show another family who had one son who committed murder (Cain and Abel), another family who had two sons that were victimized by their parent's contemptuous conduct (Esau and Jacob), and now we look at a larger family of eleven sons subjected to their parents ongoing "generational curse" of hurt and pain. This family is Jacob and Rachel, in particular Jacob, and his parenting of their eleven sons. The account of this story begins with Jacob's love for Rachel, where he had to work fourteen years for his uncle Laban to receive, officially and legally, Rachael as his wife (Gen. 29:1-30). However, Rachel could not bear children (Gen. 29:31). But one day God opened Rachel's womb and she bore a son named Joseph (Gen. 30:22-24). Because Jacob loved Rachel, more than his other wife Leah, and handmaids, Bilhah and Zilphah, of his eleven sons, he favored Joseph. Further examples of how Jacob showed favoritism towards Joseph, like Jacob's mother, Rebekah, did for him, is that Joseph told on his brothers when they acted mischievously (Gen. 37:2); Jacob visibly favored Joseph and gave him a prestigious, honorable and colorful coat, and did not give his other sons anything (Gen. 37:3). Furthermore, the birthright that was to be given to the older brother was taken from him by Jacob, due to an impropriety, and passed over the other nine brothers only to be given to Joseph, the youngest brother (I Chron. 5:1-2). While his brother's tended to the sheep, Joseph was in leisure at home and continued to be a messenger, who told on his brothers (Gen. 37:12-14). The hurt and pain that the other brothers experienced from their father's poor parenting skills led them to have an

emotional and spiritual breakdown, and inspired them to plot to kill their own brother Joseph (Gen. 37:18-20). And finally, the other brothers collectively disrespected and deceived their father Jacob by lying to him that a wild animal devoured Joseph (Gen. 37: 31-35).

The biblical literature also shows in the New Testament where young males had to endure and bear inward hurt and pain as a result of the actions of their parent, mentor or friend. Jesus tells "The Parable of the Prodigal Son" (Luke 15:11-32). It is a story of a father who had two sons, who were hurt and broken by the conduct of an unsuspecting and unassuming father, who thought conditions in the house were favorable. The parable starts by pointing out that a certain man had two sons. One son, the younger, was willing to part from tradition concerning his inheritance. He wanted to get out of the house immediately. The father knew the dangers that life in the streets held; yet, he was willing to expose his younger son to those dangers by granting him his request. A famine had arisen later in the land, and the younger son squandered his inheritance. In addition to his troubles, the younger son literally found himself in a pigpen although he was a Jew. He decided to return home in order to regain himself and become whole. When the father saw the son coming down the roadway, he welcomed and celebrated the younger son's return home. Now the older son was in the field, and he heard the celebration and commotion in the house, and discovered that this affair was to welcome his younger brother's safe return home. The older son's response demonstrates the hurt and pain that he experienced within the house because he did not greet his brother nor was he enthralled over the celebration. As a matter of fact, the scriptures report this response, "But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with

him" (Lk. 15:28). Consequently, the older son continued in his response to his father in a manner that our study seeks to examine. Our study wants to draw out from young males the hurt and pain they feel, and have them deal with it in order that healthy and responsible actions will sustain their relationships. The older son reports to his father, "...Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends" (Lk. 15:29). In short, both sons were hurt and broken by the actions of their father, whether real or imagined, and sought to be healed. For the younger son, he desired to get out of the house and be subjected to the varied experiences in the streets that led him to a pigpen. The older son showed a lack of care and concern for his younger brother's return home as well as not being rewarded by his father for his continued faithfulness and obedience at home.

Another story whose themes of hurt and pain of a young male comes to the forefront is the relationship between Paul and John Mark. Paul, in his interaction with John Mark, does not appear to have investigated his own personal feelings and thoughts. Even though the biblical literature records very little about their relationship, it appears we have enough information to make several valid conclusions. Our pericope (Acts 15:36-41) starts when Paul states to Barnabas that it would be advantageous for their ministry if they revisited the places where they had already established churches and ministries. Barnabas agreed, and suggests bringing his uncle, John Mark, with them. Paul was strongly opposed to John Mark going with them because John Mark, in Paul's estimation, had gotten sick suspiciously and abandoned him in the city of Pamphylia on their first missionary journey (Acts 15:38). Scripture further records, "Then the contention became

so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God" (Acts 15:39-40).

Here Paul, being the senior and more mature in the faith, allows his own personal agenda to subject, interfere and dissolve the relationship he shared with John Mark. For Paul, the proclamation of the gospel message superseded the importance of relationships as indicated in Jesus' admonition, "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me" (Mt.10:37-38). Nevertheless, Paul failed both to realize the hurt and pain that might have been engendered by John Mark, and even to gain an understanding of the significance for relationships in doing the work of the Lord.

In concluding on the biblical foundations, this study again seeks to create a spiritual guide or model of ministry for healing and wholeness, in particular for young males, where liberation can be achieved so that self, family, church and community will be empowered and encouraged to be healthy and a transformative institution that God has called people of faith to be. Starting with the family, healing and wholeness can be achieved as the biblical literature cites in several examples. For Cain, God protected and preserved his life by placing a mark on him (Gen. 4:15); Cain married and raised a family, bore a son named Enoch, and built a city after his own son's name (Gen. 4:16-17). For Esau and Jacob, they reconciled their differences and made peace between themselves after being separated for years (Gen. 33, in particular verses 8-11 and 15-17)). For Joseph, his father Jacob, who is now named Israel, gathered his sons together to

prophesize their last days (Gen. 49), and this time Jacob addressed each of them in order of their birth. The sons reconciled their differences, forgave each other, and they each received a blessing from him, "And he blessed them; he blessed each one according to his own blessing" (Gen. 49:28). For "The Parable of the Prodigal Son", the father welcomed and celebrated the younger son's return home, and reassured the older son that he still loved him too and that what the father had in his inheritance also belonged to the older son as well (Luke 15:31). And for Paul and John Mark, Paul sought reconciliation and understood that the work of the Lord could only be achieved through relationships of healing and wholeness as Paul recognized as he spoke to Timothy, "Only Luke is with me. Get [John] Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry" (II Tim. 4:11).

Historical Foundations

Since the creation of the heavens, the earth and humanity (Gen 1:24-31), the notion of family, regardless of its form - nuclear, extended, blended, joint, immediate or alternative lifestyle - has always been in existence. The family serves as a social institution and the chief cornerstone of society so that its members will be able to interact, react and act in the larger society. One of the church fathers, Martin Luther, stressed the sanctity of marriage and the importance of family. He maintains that they function as a stabilizing factor for human relations. "My dear fellow," Luther remarked to those who abused their marriage, "if you are bound to a wife, then you are no longer a free man; God compels and orders you to stay with your wife and children, to provide for them and rear them..."[3]

[3] Brachmann, Theodore E., ed. *Luther Works,* Vol. 46 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Fortress Press, 1960) 317.

According to Gilbert D. Nass and Gerald W. McDonald in their work, *Marriage and the Family*, they identify seven basic functions of the family as: (1) sexual reproduction or the population maintenance for society; (2) socialization or the teaching of norms, values and responsibilities; (3) economic cooperation or the operation as units of production and consumption; (4) protection or the obedience of rules and regulations as well as security under social law and order; (5) assignments of social roles and status or role expectations; (6) affection and emotional security or the development of interpersonal relationships; and (7) a sense of purpose and meaning for the psycho-social development of its individual members to engage both within the family and without in the community.[4]

In the African American experiment, majority of these basic functions of the family never materialized as a direct result of slavery. Moreover, for African Americans, it was the evolution of Christianity that became a hallmark for the survival of the African American family. Since the establishment of the first permanent English settlement in Jamestown, Virginia in August, 1619, twenty African indentured servants arrived on the shores of America. Their inclusion in the American saga changed the course of American history (from past servitude to present participation in the democratic process), and the way Christianity was both interpreted and practiced.

The Protestant settlers had varying interpretations and practice of Christianity. Of special focus were the relationship between white slave masters and their black slaves. For the slave masters, they used Christianity as a tool to orientate and dominate the slaves to conditions of bondage and dependence. While at the same time, the slave masters

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[4] Gilbert D. Nass & Gerald W. McDonald, (New York: Random House Publishing, 1982) 5-7.

combined a self-interest of social control and spiritual welfare that sufficed either as a catharsis or as justification for their dehumanization of the slaves. In the employment of Christianity as an instrument for social control, it had been the hope and expectation of the slaveholders to super-ordinate themselves, and at the same time to subordinate the slaves. For instance, the constant use of the Bible, in particular biblical references by the slave holders taught to the slaves included the curse of Ham (Gen. 9:18-27 and Joshua 9th chapter, in particular verses 21-27); (Eph. 6:5-8); (Col. 3:22-24); (Titus 2:9-10); and (I Peter 2:18-25). Through the adoption of Christianity as a means for social control by the slaveholders, this strategy did not totally serve its purposes as an end in itself. For example, the slave masters learned this fact through the conviction of their own conscience by Christian themes such as the meaning of baptism and salvation, and through slave revolts such as Charles Deslondes in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1811 and Nat Turner in Southampton County, Virginia in 1831. Consequently, what ultimately had been required to maintain social control over the slaves by the slaveholders was, "The success of the political strategy for attention to the slaves' religious life paradoxically required a considerable degree of genuine Christian concern by the masters, for it depended upon the slaves' perception of a degree of sincere white interest in their welfare."[5] Albert Raboteau further maintains, "...that the ideal of reciprocal Christianity duties had some power to arbitrate if not to ameliorate the relationship of master and slave."[6] In short, for the slaveholders, through the use of Christianity, they were able, for the most part, to purge their conscience of any wrongdoing and to justify the institution of

[5] Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972) 190.

[6] Albert Raboteau, *Slave Religion: "The Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc. 1978) 173.

slavery. The white oppressors also tried to impregnate the blacks, both slave and free, with the notion that they (blacks) were innately inferior, compelling them to accept their status, and to have an otherworldly concern in which the Lord Jesus Christ would reward them for their ostensible behavior of obedience. Furthermore, in the process of evangelization and indoctrination, blacks were taught the language of their oppressor, who had hope to secure further black bondage.

In contrast, for the black slaves, their appropriation of Christianity served as paramount and foundational to influence their liberation struggle. The sensibilities of Christianity for the slaves were borne out of experiences of oppression, suffering and second-class citizenship as they struggled for survival, sanity and a sense of purpose as diminished people. Subsequently, through the emergence of the black church (the organizational structure) and black religion (a theological interpretation of God's nature and also God's purpose in the African American experience or cultural context), the black church operated in an organizational environment where black religion could be interpreted, appropriated and expressed by the community and its leaders. Moreover, C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya present in their work the significance of religion in the African American experience, "… slave religion played a major role in the survival of the slaves by preventing their complete dehumanization when it presented alternative views of their worth in God's eyes."[7] The Bible formed the bases and motivation for religious fortitude in the African American experience,

> Beyond mere survival, black churches and clergy have also been continually involved in a broad range of political activities, both reformist and radical. These reformist and radical activists stemmed from the liberation tradition of the heritage of black churches,

[7] C. Eric Lincoln & Lawrence Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990) 201.

which were based on their own interpretations of Old Testament stories, prophetic pronouncements, and New Testament apocalypse. [8]

Another difference between religion as interpreted and practiced in the African American tradition in contrast to that of the white faith tradition had been that African Americans believed that God was on their side, and that God also informed their thoughts and actions. One scholar shows,

> The differences of theological outlook between black churches and their white counterparts were related more to the life situations of the members than to deliberate choice. African Americans were an oppressed people, and although their traditional theology might be described as evangelical and their life style as pietistic, they balanced the "promise of heaven's reward" with expectations that God would presently deliver their brethren from bondage and that He would liberate all blacks from social, political, and economic oppression.[9]

In summary, religion, and Christianity, in particular, was not only a cornerstone for the survival of slaves in the American republic, but also served as a gateway for the emergence of the black church, religion and life.

At the same time, there were other black slaves burning with the flames of salvation and liberation, and not satisfied with their condition of servitude or second-class citizenship. They did not view the terms "salvation and liberation" as mutually exclusive, but adopted them as inextricably bound and bearing the seal of a tripartite meaning. They defined these terms of "salvation and liberation" as: (1) a sense of dignity and human worth; (2) a radical transformation in the structures which cause injustice and prevent the formation of community; and (3) redemption for those who love the appearing of God. According to Gayraud Wilmore, a noted church historian, with the accessibility of

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[8] Ibid, 202.

[9] Wardell J. Payne, *Directory of African American Religious Bodies: A Compendium by the Howard University School of Divinity* (Washington D.C.: Howard University Press, 1991) 6.

language, these "blacks have used Christianity not so much as it was delivered to them by white racist churches, but as its truth was authenticated to them in the experience of suffering and struggling, to reinforce an acculturated religious orientation and to produce an indigenous faith that emphasized dignity, freedom, and human welfare."[10] With the emergence of the black church and black religion during the antebellum period, Edward Wimberly in his book, *Pastoral Care in the Black Church,* presents pastoral care and counseling from an African American perspective. For him, historically, sustaining and guiding have functioned simultaneously as the caring and survival resources from slavery to the present. For Wimberly, the definition of sustaining is the "...bringing to bear upon the person in crisis the total caring resources of the church in such a way that the person is enabled to transcend and endure circumstances that are not immediately alterable." [11] By guiding, Wimberly means "...helping persons in crisis to choose positive, healthy crisis-coping mechanisms."[12] The primary source employed to sustain and guide African American in slavery and segregation through crisis was the pastor in corporate worship.

This discussion about the black church and black religion includes how these concepts have acted as a catalyst to aid in our understanding of the impact of slavery on African American families. Slavery literally tore African American families asunder through the emasculation of the black male, the degradation of black women, the dehumanization of the slaves by slaveholders through control and the perpetuation of a social system to ignite and inspire the dependence of slaves on their slaveholders. Furthermore, slavery

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[10] Gayraud Wilmore, *Black Religion & Black Radicalism* (Maryknoll: New York, Orbis Books) 4.

[11] Edward Wimberly, *Pastoral Care in the Black Church (Nashville, Tennesee: Abingdon Press, 1979)* 19.

[12] Ibid. 19-20.

disembarked and disengaged the seven basic functions of a "family" to embark and engage effectively on its members to fit into the larger community. Consequently, it was the black church and black religion that paved the way for the survival, sanctity and sense of purpose for African Americans.

Within the African American experience, the notion of healing and wholeness or "the promising", which often times is born out of the "tragic", to give humanity another lease on relationships. The black church is a by-product of "the promising". She was born out of tragedy that involves slavery, injustice, segregation and racism. From her inception, the black church had been the primary force within the African American community to struggle for freedom, equality and justice, and to advance the survival of her people. In short, the black church sought healing and wholeness for her people and communities.

Historically, African American communities and its leadership have vented their displeasure of a racists system through various forms of protest involving acts of violence, non-violence and resistance. Those forms of protest have borne at least three elements: (a) the theological underpinning that God's hand has been involved in a critical plan of liberation; (b) a mindset that African Americans would never be content with their status of servitude or second-class citizenship in America; and (c) the black church would be the primary vehicle to proclaim the good news of the gospel, and at the same time to minister to the myriad needs of her people. For the purpose of our discussion, we will focus on the third aspect of proclamation, in particular the black church, ministering to the spiritual and social needs of African Americans through the witness of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC).

The African Methodist Episcopal Church emerged out of the Free African Society, a self-help effort, which Richard Allen and others established in Philadelphia in 1787. Richard Allen was a former slave from Delaware, who purchased his freedom as well as his family. He had been a member of the Saint George's Methodist Episcopal Church also located in Philadelphia, when white officials pulled blacks off their knees while in prayer at the altar, Allen and others abandoned the church. It was at this point that he and the others "...considered it their duty to devise a plan in order to build a house of their own in which they could worship God under their own vine and fig tree."[13] These displaced black members of Saint George's made plans to transform their budding mutual aid society into a religious congregation for blacks. Although most wanted to affiliate with the Protestant Episcopal Church, Allen led a small group who resolved to remain Methodist. In 1794, Bethel AMEC was dedicated, and Allen was appointed her first pastor.

Being a minister in the AMEC, the writer fully identifies with the mission and purpose of the church, "to minister to the spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional, and environmental needs of all people by spreading Christ's liberating gospel through word and deed."[14] Every local church has the responsibility to pursue with passion the purpose and mission of the Church. But sometimes a church fails to maintain and uphold her ministries and duties. Some churches get caught up in ugly internal fights and negative attitudes. Some churches are burdened by financial obligations, regarding their local church budget as well as to their Annual and General Conferences responsibilities. Yet

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[13] Johnny Barvour, Jr., Publisher, *The Doctrine & Discipline of the AME Church 2004-2008*, (Nashville, Tennesee: AMEC Sunday School Union 2005) 5.

[14] Ibid. 15.

the fact remains that there are families within and outside of the church that have youth who are hurting and wounded from the social circumstances surrounding their lives, and they seek recovery and resolve.

In the black church, again historically, the pastor functioned in the ubiquitous role of leader, and as the one who empowers and encourages the people. However, as Edward Wimberly points out in his work, *Pastoral Care in the Black Church,* within a post-modern society, there has been a decentralization of the role of the pastor and support system both in the African American churches and communities. Moreover, he indicates that the role of the pastor should be less authoritative and be more engaged in the empowering, equipping and encouraging African Americans to overcome the barriers of their oppression.[15]

The role of the pastor, as it relates to pastoral care and counseling, is aligned to God and God's relationship with the children of Israel as well as to Jesus Christ in the promulgation of his gospel message. God called prophets and people to deliver messages to the children of Israel concerning their misconduct and what was required for acceptable conduct. Regardless of their circumstances, God promised a conditional message of healing and wholeness which is also a constant theme that runs throughout the Old Testament, "No man shall be able to stand against you;…Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God…and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God…And you shall be careful to observe all the statutes and judgments which I set before you today " (Deut. 11:25-28, and 32). And, as it also relates to Jesus' earthly

[15] Edward Wimberly, *Pastoral Care in the Black Church* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979) 11.

ministry, he brought healing and wholeness to multitudes and various individuals through his preaching, teaching, ministry and miracles.

In the African American tradition, the pastor played a central and essential role in the church, although a pastor might not even have been aware of her/his role in pastoral care and counseling. According to William Clebsch and Charles Jaekle in their work, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective,* they cite four key elements embodied in pastoral care and counseling: (1) healing to restore a person to wholeness by helping that person move beyond her/his previous condition; (2) sustaining is a person who endures and go beyond her/his present illness, if at all possible; (3) guiding to assist persons to perceive alternative ways or other courses of thought and deed; and (4) reconciling and restoring the reestablishment of a broken relationship.[16] Wimberly agrees with Clebsch and Jaekle that these four elements of pastoral care and counseling do exist in the black church; yet, they take on different forms given the context of slavery and racial oppression. The pastor stood at the helm of the black church to sustain and guide the people during the twin evils of slavery and segregation.

Even during the 60's, when the walls of segregation came tumbling down and African Americans secured the right to vote, clergypersons were at the forefront of the Civil Rights Movement as they led and guided. Also during the same era, the notion of black liberation theology arose when fifty-one black pastors purchased a full-page ad in the New York Times and declared that African Americans must take "a more aggressive approach to combating racism using the Bible for inspiration."[17] James Cone in his work,

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[16] Ibid. 18-20.

[17] October, 2008, Wikipedia Inc., (http://wikipedia.org wiki:/ black_liberation_theology). 1.

Black Theology and Black Power, was emphatic that black power was not foreign to the gospel message, but it is the gospel message. The gospel message continues to act as a sustaining element where preaching is also the prevailing tool used by the pastor, and a guiding element is also used to inspire through the proclamation of the Word of God. As youth remain in the church and those who come to unite with the church in the future, the pastor should play a vital role because these youth are still subject to the nuances and deceit of the world.

Howard Clinebell in his work, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, maintains that there are four basic functions of pastoral care and counseling that includes healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling as essential elements for the healing of persons and people. Clinebell, however, adds a fifth element that is "nurturing". This element intertwines with the other four elements; yet, it is distinctive in terms of its focus on education, enrichment and development.[18]

In a similar spirit, what our study seeks to accomplish is to create an environment where young males, who have experienced hurt and pain in their lives and who are in a local church, can participate in a setting where their issues of hurt and pain can be easily and effectively addressed. Let us again look at Michael's experiences, where a supportive environment, including home, church and community, was absent for him to express his hurt and pain.

Upon the death of his mother, Michael was a prisoner within his own world to feelings of psychological, emotional and spiritual hurt and pain that needed to be released and expressed; yet, he was not even aware that a potential debilitating condition could exist

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[18] Howard Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counseling*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press 1984) 42-43.

later in his life. Moreover, at the time of his mother's untimely death, Michael wondered about his mother's thoughts when she had been alive. Maybe she herself had not received love and affection from her parents and could only reciprocate those same feelings she had learned and experienced toward her children? What expectations did she have for each of her children? What type of family environment gave rise to her personality and spiritual development? What kind of hurt and pain did she harbor within her life? What were her hopes and dreams for herself? Maybe she had done the best she could do with what she had. None of these questions really seemed to matter to Michael then, but what was of significance at the time of his mother's untimely death, along with other pent-up emotions such as anger, insecurity, mistrust, confusion, guilt and anxiety, was a new feeling called abandonment.

At the homegoing service, Michael again looked in his mother's coffin and mentally shouted at her, "Mummy how could you do this to us? How could you leave us in this mess?" ("this mess" refers to six children who were in an emotional quandary and now faced being separated through child adoption). No answer came from heaven. No answer came from hell. No answer came from the people screaming and shouting at the funeral service. No answer came from anywhere. Shocking as it may seem, even at the interment, still no answer came forward. Michael did not have anyone he could turn to as a confidant to express his hurt and pain, and all the emotions that comes from the death of a loved one, especially one's mother. As has happened at many funeral services, Michael arrived at the place,

> When the funeral service is over, the mourners return home sad and depressed. At this juncture, the child is ignored. His tentative questions are brusquely answered or quickly

silenced. Rather than being embraced and taken into the sorrowing group, he is sent away to ponder alone what has occurred.[19]

This is exactly what happened to Michael. At the time that he needed someone to answer his questions and to lean on, no one was there. He endured his hurt and pain alone.

What a resourceful and eventful life Michael has experienced, some situations were wonderful and others were disappointing. Yet, they make-up who he is and have prepared him for the context he now serves, Grady-Madison AMEC. Consistent with the tradition of the black church, Michael is in position to administer pastoral ministry as well as pastoral care and counseling. His presence at Grady-Madison AMEC is no mere accident or happenstance, but a synergy or the coming together of a pastor within her/his context through a divine appointment to minister to specific needs within the congregation to bring healing and wholeness to others.

After being at Grady-Madison AMEC for less than a year, something remarkable resulted. Reminiscent of Michael's childhood, he could hear the voices of the youth in his church talk a little about their hurt and pain. As he probed further with conversations between these youth and their parents/guardians, Michael discovered that these youth had similar experiences concerning life's predicaments, pitfalls and pain. But the major difference this time is that these youth have a listening and caring ear, which is the beginning point for healing and wholeness. These youth are at a crossroad in their lives either to be victims of their own hurt, pain, loss and brokenness or instruments of healing, empowerment, liberation and wholeness. The research project will focus on creating an

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[19] Earl A. Grollman, ed., *Explaining Death to Children*, (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1967) 94.

environment or safe haven for these young males at Grady-Madison AMEC to share their hurt and pain so that their own healing and wholeness will become a reality, and these same youth can be liberated to help others.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Research Hypothesis

The researcher experienced and interacted with young males for over twenty-five years in a variety of venues such as a juvenile detention facility, commissioner of a youth basketball ministry, assistant coach of senior high basketball team, youth boot-camp and as a pastor. During this course of time, the researcher noted that an alarming number of young males: (a) find little meaning and have an inadequate understanding of the church; (b) are inundated with unresolved grief and myriad of challenging problems; (c) lack a responsible adult to confide in or depend on for support and/or guidance; and (d) continue to deal with psychological, emotional and spiritual concerns that find expressions in aberrant behaviors including anger, depression and social alienation. Like other institutions, the church often found herself impotent and impervious in her ability to confront and resolve the hurt and pain that plague and stymies the growth and development of young African American males. As the social order further shifts from influences of the sacred to the dominance of the secular, the researcher became engaged in seeing a vision of service designed to lessen the hurt and pain borne so often now by young African American males.

Therefore, the hypothesis of this research project maintains that if any church constructs a safe haven for youth to have uninhibited dialogue about their hurt and pain, then strength and vitality will help to repair their psychological, emotional and spiritual development and will provide the necessary tools to bring balance back into their lives. Young African American males, however, who lack this alternative of a safe haven in the

church will simply continue to fall prey to a life filled with unpredictable and dangerous behaviors that ultimately will adversely affect their relationships with themselves, others and God.

Research Project

This research project was born shortly after the researcher arrived at Grady-Madison African Methodist Episcopal Church in Madison, Alabama. From the pulpit, the researcher observed young African American males who were troubled and withdrawn from the worship service, fixed in a deep trance or thought, and/or wore a depressive countenance from the commencement of the worship experience to its conclusion. These young men sat in the rear of the church, did not even socialize among themselves or with other members of the church, and seemed a separate cohort individually isolated. They acted like fish on land or as if they were strangers in an exotic land. In several encounters with these young males, the researcher discovered that they claimed, "everything was alright" in their lives. Yet, the hurt and pain could be clearly perceived although masked in their disposition, posturing, profiling and non-verbal language. This fact also was confirmed through the researcher's own investigative efforts through dialogue with their relatives, friends and church members who stated that traumatic situations weigh heavily in the lives of these youth. Howard Clienbell, in his work, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, asserts, "If the problem is not resolved, the inner stress of unmet needs mounts until it reaches another threshold --- the breaking point where major personality disorganization (psychological, psychosomatic, interpersonal, or spiritual illness)

occurs."[1] In a more graphic description of unresolved hurt and pain, Andrew Sung Park in his book, *From Hurt to Healing,* argues, "When people's deep wounds are not healed, the wounds become vortexes of troubled waters, intertwined with their own instinct of survival and fear…they see the world through their oppressors' eyes."[2] He further highlights the liability of a child who experienced pain and hurt, and carries those emotions through adulthood, "…when a child is badly hurt or terrified, that pain not only produces a traumatic memory, it also changes the developing brain…abused children are inclined to suffer from depression, drug abuse, and other chronic ailments as adults."[3] John Albert Brun, in his study, *An Investigation into the Adolescent's Conception of Death*, affirms Park's conclusion and declares, "…numerous researchers have attributed various pathological outcomes in personality development and function as a result of childhood bereavement, particularly loss of the mother." [4]

For the researcher, the urgency of the moment became quite apparent due to the fact that at one time the researcher too had unresolved hurt and pain over the sudden loss of his mother when he was a youth. As he grew older, the researcher subsequently developed a "deep wound" (a term coined by Parks) that became cancerous in some of his relationships, especially with women. For instance, the researcher's unresolved hurt and pain manifested itself in the devaluation of women, exhibited a lack trust in them,

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[1] Howard Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counseling* (Nashville, Tennesee: Abingdon Press, 1989), 186.

[2] Andrew Sung Park, *From Hurt to Healing* (Nashville, Tennesee: Abingdon Press, 2004), 3.

[3] Park. 12.

[4] John Albert Brun, *An Investigation into the Adolescent's Conception of Death* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1983) 6.

failed to sustain meaningful relationships with them and that often times had short-term duration. But by the grace of God, the researcher was fortunately liberated from his hurt and pain many years ago through a Clinical Pastoral Educational program. The researcher was subsequently afforded an opportunity at United Theological Seminary's doctoral degree program to construct and apply his own spiritual guide or model of ministry for healing and wholeness to liberate young African American males in a technocratic society. The spiritual guide for healing and wholeness provides a means for understanding the hurt and pain of those young males. In addition, the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness would also serve as a guide to open avenues of communication between the researcher and youth to address issues that hindered their ability to be productive and resourceful in relationships.

The focus of this research project was to build a spiritual guide for healing and wholeness that promotes the encouragement of personal growth and development, and that results in a wholeness which advances empowerment through hope to help others, for young African American males (ages 13-18 years), who experienced hurt and pain, both past and/or present in their lives. This extensive research project commenced in early February, 2009 and concluded in late May, 2009.

This spiritual guide for healing and wholeness was developed at Grady-Madison African Methodist Episcopal Church in Madison, Alabama as well as the Huntsville-Madison Public Library in Huntsville, Alabama. The researcher chose to design the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness in those two locations for two reasons. One reason was that the research project itself involved a constant theme and tension between the theological and the secular. The researcher is a pastor whereas the

investigator/evaluator was a mental health counselor. The church served as a comfort zone for the researcher whereas the library acted as a comfort zone for the youth and the investigator/evaluator. The researcher primarily interpreted an analysis of the youth from the perspectives of pastoral ministry and pastoral care and counseling whereas the investigator/evaluator made an analysis of the youth from the perspective of psychology and principals of mental health counseling. The researcher wanted the youth to perceive and experience the church as a safe haven, a place of refuge and as an available resource in their lives. It should be noted that one of the resource tools used, the one-on-one interview, allowed for some down time so that the youth could take advantage of their time to study and utilize the library's varied services not provided by the church. A second reason for using both the church and library was to accommodate those involved. Two of the youth lived and attended senior high school in Madison, and the other two youth lived near and attended college in Huntsville.

In this research project, four young African American males participated and began the program including: (a) Youth A is a seventeen year old male sophomore in high school; (b) Youth B is an eighteen year old college freshman; (c) Youth C is also an eighteen year old college freshman; and (d) Youth D is a seventeen year old high school senior.

The plan for the research project required the researcher and investigator/evaluator to serve as an evaluation team who would attend, participate, observe and/or make assessments of the youth and the overall research project for a total of eighteen sessions (see Appendix S). Essentially, at the beginning and conclusion of each session, the evaluation team would come together to assess their subsequent findings in order to

establish validity within the overall research project. The research questions formulated to maintain a frame of reference were as follows: (a) what traumatic experience(s) did the youth recall in his lifetime that caused him hurt and pain?; (b) are the youth dealing with unresolved issues, current problems or both?; (c) what do they wish they could change currently in their lives whether physical, emotional, psychological and/or spiritual?; (d) who did the youth hold responsible for their present or past hurt and pain?; (identify each situation); (e) how do the youth link God as the perpetrator to their hurt and pain?; and (f) what productive manner did they use regarding their hurt and pain to be an enabler who helped others going through similar experiences of hurt and pain?

The spiritual guide for healing and wholeness finds itself sub-divided into five major features that can lead a young male from hurt and pain (healing) to sharing his experience with others to liberate them (wholeness). A pastor who utilizes this spiritual guide must carefully plan, strategically implement and patiently allow the process to work itself through with much prayer. While this process is primarily scientific, it is also deeply spiritual. After a brief discussion concerning the five features of the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness, the researcher will likewise highlight the format of the sessions that were used to achieve the objectives of the research project.

The first feature of the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness begins with the pastor. The challenges for a pastor are threefold. First, the pastor must be the leader. Within the African American tradition, the pastor had been the primary figure that led and guided congregants and their families from hurt and pain to healing and wholeness. However, due to societal changes from an agrarian community to a post-modern society, the role of the pastor shifted from being in the forefront to being in the background where

other officers in the church assumed many of the responsibilities of the pastor including preaching. But this spiritual guide strongly suggests that the pastor must recapture her/his place of leadership within the congregation. The pastor must become one who is an enabler that loves and cares for people and is also responsible for the construction of and involvement in healthy relationships within the congregation. Again, the pastor must "…take the initiative by reaching out to those in crisehjs and building bridges of trust with them so that they may be able to accept the help offered."[5] Second, the pastor must be educated and adequately trained to provide leadership and guidance for complex problems. At the same time of being the leader, the pastor also must have obtained the required seminary and academic training both in pastoral ministry, and pastoral care and counseling. Why so much education is a fair concern given this model of ministry? Within a post-modern society, however, the pastor's relationship with congregants through pastoral care and counseling had become impersonal and been minimized as changes within society had become more superfluous, and congregational interactions with their communities had also become more intricate. Moreover, society has grown larger and situations that congregants now confront are more complicated and convoluted as evidenced by higher suicide rates and violence against persons, and pastors literally lack the ability, educational training and proper resources to formulate viable solutions. On many fronts, juvenile delinquency has escalated, domestic violence continues to rise, divorce rates remain high, and crimes have proliferated to enumerate a few social ills that plague individuals, families and communities. From this myriad of incidences congregants find themselves victimized and possibly bearing "deep wounds" or hurt and pain. In spite of the problems that congregates face as well as the emotional and spiritual

[5] Clinebell. 36.

wounds they sustain, this study is particularly concerned about the welfare of young males. This population of African American males is engaged in many of the adverse societal ills. At the same time, this at-risk population receives the least amount of attention and assistance as indicative of an increase in the prison population and street gangs. With the complexities and challenges of life's situations, the pastor must depend upon her/his training, expertise and skills to respond to these needs. And third, the pastor must resolve the hurt and pain in her/his own life. In order to help others through their hurt and pain, a pastor must first deal with their own hurt and pain with the assistance of someone who specializes in that area of counseling. Dealing with prior and personal hurt and pain will aid the pastor not to impose her/his own values, disorders and opinions on the person who needs help. Acute problems require informed and insightful skills.

A second feature of the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness is the evaluation team. Even though the pastor is the coordinator and at forefront of the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness, the pastor does not function alone in the analysis and conclusions about the youth. A pastor does not have all the answers and when one is dealing with a youth, one must strive to render a correct analysis. It is true for this research project that, "it does take a village to raise a child."A first for this metaphorical village is the evaluation team. The evaluation team was necessary in order to identify, understand and address the psychological, social, emotional and physical needs of African American males. The evaluation team represents a collaborative and functional approach to pastoral, family and professional counseling, and provides those qualities of involvement that improves positive outcome among the youth. The evaluation team provided the research project with a practical guide containing information that is related to

psychological, emotional, spiritual, communicative, and social-emotional development in order to determine the specific needs and develop an adequate plan of resolve and recovery.

The third feature of the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness are congregants and professionals, or an interdisciplinary team. Within this research project, the congregants and professionals are identified as context and professional associates, respectively. The context associates were members in the church who the researcher trusted with confidential information about the youth. They also had personal involvement with the youth such as being parents, guardian, relatives and/or friends. In addition, the professional associates were persons who had specific expertise in the field concerning human development and social relations, and who could also make reasonable suggestions, assessments and recommendations concerning the physical and/or spiritual outlay for the youth involved.

A fourth feature of the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness was a theoretical counseling approach gained from the behavioral sciences. As indicated previously, our society has become more complex and the number of people continues to increase who lack the abilities, resources and confidence to cope with their crisis. Even within the African American church today, the pastor uses pastoral care and counseling and "...cannot rely on his or her office to command leadership in the black church as in the past...There needs to be a bridge between past models and present realities in black pastoral care."[6] The best bridge to serve and compliment this study and purposes in pastoral care and counseling is Person-centered and Adlerian theoretical counseling

[6] Edward Wimberly. *Church Pastoral Care in the Black.* (Nashville, Tennesee: Abingdon Press, 1979) 76.

approaches that comes from the behavioral sciences. Moreover, the Person-centered and Adlerian theoretical approaches were chosen as a resource for healing and wholeness, due to the fact that they are familiar and doable techniques in the field of psychology, counseling and education. Since the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness suggests, from the onset, that the pastor is trained in both pastoral ministry and pastoral care and counseling, this researcher and the investigator/evaluator had a discussion and agreed to use and incorporate both a Person-centered counseling approach (whose founder is Carl Rogers) as well as an Adlerian counseling approach (whose founder is Alfred Adler) as being best-suited for the objectives of this research project. A pastor who uses this spiritual guide for healing and wholeness can adopt any counseling technique from the behavioral sciences that best addresses that person's needs for healing and wholeness. Without being too technical or clinical in either one of these counseling approaches, the evaluation team adopted both of these counseling approaches for the following reasons. The Person-centered counseling approach includes: (a) its view of human nature, with its emphasis on human beings as good (created by God), self-directed and goal oriented under the right conditions or environment; (b) the role of the counselor focuses on the client's uniqueness in the world and is non-judgmental, and accepts the client as she/he is; (c) the goals are realistic in that they are self-directed, self-explorative and deals with the present; (d) the techniques are good and manageable for paraprofessionals; (e) a reflection of a person's feelings are required, and uses empathy and self-disclosure to bring about change; and (f) it addresses a variety of human problems. The Adlerian counseling approach includes: (a) its positive view of human nature; (b) the use of birth order and family constellation to explain human personality; (c) the role of the counselor

as an equalitarian with the client, encourages the client and shares information with the client; (d) the goals are to develop the client's insight about behavioral change through acting "as if", and corrects misguided goals; and (e) the techniques are to place emphasis on the client's strengths, responsibility through confrontation, examines the client's memories and priorities, and gives support and encouragement to the client. In short, both theoretical counseling approaches, the Person-centered and Adlerian, were also used based on there reputation for short-term counseling, manageability and effectiveness.

It may be helpful at this point to recall the definition for healing and wholeness as used in this research project. Healing is that process that liberates from hurtful and painful experiences, past and/or present, and that ultimately leads to the uplift of human personality and a pursuit of healthy relationships. Wholeness is defined as a person who had been liberated from a "deep wound" (hurt and pain), and who subsequently became a "wounded healer" to help heal others of their own hurt and pain. For instance, the Person-centered theoretical counseling approach strives to meet these ends as it contends that,

> The helper, by communicating empathy, honesty, congruence, genuineness, and acceptance of the helpee, is able to create a nonthreatening climate in which helpees can explore their own feelings, thoughts, and behavior and gain some understanding of themselves and their world…For this technique to be effective, the helpee must be able to perceive these feelings and attitudes on the part of the helper. The technique of responsive listening may suffice as the only strategy needed in a helping relationship.[7]

The fifth feature of the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness is the use of resource tools. For this research project, a resource tool was an activity, such as a Bible study, workshops, or interviews that had either a theological approach or a practical application to accomplish the following purposes: (a) to create an environment or safe haven for the youth to have uninhibited dialogue with the evaluation team, context associates, and/or

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[7] Barbara F. Okun, *Effective Helping: Interviewing and Counseling Techniques* (Pacific Grover, California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 2007) 154.

among themselves; (b) to present the consequences of a problem or decision from a life application scenario posed to the youth as identified by the evaluation team, context and/or professional associates; (c) to teach a variety of alternatives to their problems by embracing their feelings rather than acting them out; (d) to be supportive of a youth when evidences of transformation from hurt and pain to healing presented itself in negative forms such as anger and withdrawal; and (e) to be positive in handling past/present situation(s) that left the youth hurt and/or in trouble and struggling against tumultuous tides. A variety of resource tools such as a panel discussion, interviews, group therapy, rap session, Bible studies, movies, and workshops were used to effect change in the thought and behavior of the youth for three reasons. One reason for a variety of resource tools was: (a.) to serve as an example of a real-life situation that would provoke thinking and lead to problem-solving; (b.) to teach Biblical principles that can be applied in daily living; (c.) to support and encourage the youth through their sharing of personal experiences; and (d.) to instruct the youth in ways and values to establish meaningful relationships that are both familial and non-familial. A second reason for the use of different resource tools was to sustain the youth's attention and keep them interested in the research project. For all practical purposes, each of the resource tools could stand on its own merit and terms. Even though this was true, the evaluation team, however, decided that "variety is the spice of life" in that from the evaluation team's experience in working with youth that doing the same thing over and over again eventually runs the risk of leading to boredom and becoming disinteresting to youth. Finally, a third reason for using a variety of resource tools was to gather feedback from the youth that would further assist in assessing their problems and making recommendations for resolution of

the same. These various approaches provided critical information on the youth from various perspectives and based on different experiences.

Before the researcher outlines the various sessions that were adopted for this research project, it must be understood that there were challenges and complexities that must first be confronted in order to devise creative strategies and realistic goals to transform human behavior. Within the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness, a two-prong approach was adopted, a theological approach juxtaposed with a practical application. The researcher concluded that for a theological approach to be effective in human behavior there must also be some practical applications involved as well. The researcher argued that for a practical application to be effective in human behavior there must conversely be a theological effort involved. The theological approach did not overshadow nor cancel out a practical application. Conversely, a practical application did not over-ride nor diminish a theological approach. There was constantly a healthy tension between these two influences, a theological approach and a practical application, which brought balance to a God ordained life. It must be observed that Jesus was both human and divine – a healthy tension existed between the two dimensions. Furthermore, with the utilization of scientific sources such as psychology, this also demonstrates that the church is not locked in another time period, but has expanded its purview beyond being exclusively biblical.

In each session, regardless of the resource tool selected, a standardized format was generated to reflect the overall objectives of the research project so that there would be consistency throughout each session. The standardized format included an opening and closing prayer, a summation of the research project, reiteration of the objectives to be achieved, a chosen resource tool, a lecture or discussion on a particular issue related to

the youth's hurt and pain, an uninhibited dialogue between the evaluation team and the youth, a question and answer period, and a brief summary of the session. Moreover, a session ran for a minimum of one hour (depending upon the resource tool) up to a maximum of three hours as outlined by the evaluation team, which also took under consideration of the youths' homework or study time, work schedule, and/or a respectable time to be home.

There were a grand total of eighteen sessions (see Appendix S). The spiritual guide for healing and wholeness was constructed and contained within those eighteen sessions between the evaluation team, context associates and the professional associates on four African American males through a variety of research tools such as a research project orientation session, a panel discussion session, a rap session, two group therapy sessions, two workshop sessions, three interview sessions, and five Bible study and movie sessions.

The eighteen sessions were sub-divided into three categorical phases (where pastoral ministry and pastoral care and counseling, and a therapeutic environment were injected): Phase One represented "before self-disclosure", where the sessions were of an orientative, investigative and discovery nature (sessions one thru three) to learn more about the youth; Phase Two represented "during self-disclosure" where the sessions primarily were of an analytical, strategical and developmental nature (sessions four thru twelve) to assist the youth in growth and development; and Phase Three represented "after self-disclosure" where the sessions consisted of summation, recommendations and conclusions (sessions thirteen thru eighteen) to empower, encourage and support the youth.

As it relates to "self-disclosure", the researcher will provide additional information. Self-disclosure was a vital healing tool used to grant the youth an opportunity to discuss their issues without judgment and condemnation on the evaluation team's part. The researcher felt that it was very important for the youth to speak openly about what was bothering them for several reasons: (a) the hurt would be recognized, expressed and released; (b) the issues could be viewed by others and addressed; and (c) the healing process could begin.

Phase One, "before self-disclosure", represented the hurt and pain that the researcher (pastor) possibly observed and searched for in the youth during the onset of his arrival at Grady-Madison AMEC that had not been addressed. Often times, the hurt and pain were from both past and/or present experiences. Resource tools such as a pre-questionnaire, spiritual autobiography, a movie, and a one-on-one interview were used to identify those issues. It turned-out that those issues, past and present, that the youth shared as a group were self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation. There were also independent issues that the youth did not share as a group but only individually, such as a personal fantasy, an escape from reality, trust verses mistrust, parental issues, poor decision-making and coping skills, and concerns of sexual identity.

Phase Two, "during self-disclosure," represented possible resolutions and remedies to those identified issues in the youths' lives. Self-disclosure continued to assist the evaluation team in identifying issues, both individually and as a group, as well as to monitor the degree of hurt and pain expressed by the youth. It was also during this Phase that the evaluation team, along with the professional associates, identified three

consistent issues that were persistent in the lives of each youth: self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation.

Most of the resource tools in the research project were used in this Phase to assist the youth in their growth and development, and then ultimately their liberation. From a theological approach, the use of Bible stories were used for biblical principles and applied to daily living in the following: Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1-17), Joseph and his brothers (Genesis 37:12-36; 47), the Prophet Ezekiel and the Valley of Dry Bones (Ezekiel 37:1-14), and the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) joined with related questions generated by the context associates. Also in Phase Two, the resource tools that were used also had practical applications such as group therapy, movies, a rap session and a one-on-one interview.

Phase Three, "after self-disclosure," represented a stage where the youth were confronted with their issues and resource tools were provided in order: (a) to teach positive decision-making and coping skills; (b) to address recurrent issues (self identity, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation) that posed a threat to the youths' lives physically, psychologically, emotionally and/or spiritually; (c) to gain further insight into what positive directions the youths' lives could be directed; and (d) to empower and encourage the youth to assist others in their brokenness once they resolved their own hurt and pain. The resource tools used during this Phase included workshops, a Bible study, movies, a group therapy session, one-on-one interviews, panel discussions and a post-questionnaire.

Finally, the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness was much needed within the pastor's context where young African American males might be unaware of their "deep

wounds" of hurt and pain that could have a negative impact on their relationships with themselves, others and even God. Hurt and pain are not realities restricted only to these young persons and the researcher's context, but their realities are widespread. Andrew Sung Park, is correct in his conclusion about the church's role in this process as he asserts, "In this world of violence, the church must address the issue of these deep wounds (han) and the issue of sin if the church wants to be relevant to and effective in transforming and healing the world."[8] Therefore, as we move forward to gain experience in the field to put our theory of the research project into practice, it will be a success, "If one victim who struggles in her or his lonely journey to healing and liberation finds help here, the effort will have been worth it."[9]

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[8] Park. 3.

[9] Ibid. 7.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

The spiritual guide for healing and wholeness was developed at Grady-Madison African Methodist Episcopal Church in Madison, Alabama and the Huntsville-Madison Public Library in Huntsville, Alabama. In the research project, there were four young African American males who participated: (a) Youth A is a seventeen year-old sophomore in high school; (b) Youth B is an eighteen year old college freshman; (c) Youth C is also an eighteen year old college freshman; and (d) Youth D is a seventeen year-old high school senior. The spiritual guide for healing and wholeness was also constructed within eighteen sessions between the evaluation team, context associates and the professional associates on these four young African American males. Through a variety of resource tools such as a research project orientation session, a panel discussion session, a rap session, two group therapy sessions, two workshop sessions, three one-on-one interview sessions, four movie sessions, and four Bible study sessions, the evaluation team was able to establish a safe haven where uninhibited dialogue with the youth was achieved and "self-disclosure" was reached. A session ran for a minimum of one hour (depending upon the resource tool) and, in some cases, a maximum of three hours (primarily interviews) as outlined by the evaluation team, which took under consideration of the youths' homework or study time, work schedule, and/or a respectable time to be home.

A. Phase One: "Before Self-Disclosure"

The evaluation team came together as a result of the researcher's observations from the pulpit of the troubled youths' varied expressions in the congregation. He was reminded of a time in his life when hurt and pain once existed. He was not able to identify a particular hurt and pain in those youth, but familiar expressions such as body language and conversations symbolized some type of hurtful and painful experience(s) that was unresolved in their life. He recalled several times in his youth where feelings over the sudden death of his mother and relocation of his family into an unfamiliar home, were unresolved issues of hurt and pain that eventually spilled-over into his adult life, only later to cause him more distress and anguish.

Upon sharing his now resolved experiences, the researcher and the mental health counselor came together to form "the evaluation team", and concluded that the most feasible manner to introduce themselves to those youth was to learn more about them and share their personal experiences. Subsequently, a pre-questionnaire (see Appendix A) and a spiritual autobiography (see Appendix B) were designed. The construction of the questions in the pre-questionnaire was designed where the answers would be representative of the youth's character, future goals and spiritually. Furthermore, the questions and answers also helped to assist in the identification of possible hurt and pain within the youth. It was at this point that the evaluation team began to discuss and develop the most effective and manageable counseling approaches and techniques that would be consistent with the length of time of the research project. After a lengthy

discussion, the evaluation team decided to use the Person-centered and Adlerian theoretical counseling approaches.

Session One

A definite time and place were discussed that would be both ideal and accessible for all parties involved in the research project. The evaluation team decided to meet at Grady-Madison AMEC and the times would be structured around the youths' availability. Moreover, the evaluation team felt that it would a fitting gesture to begin the opening and closing sessions at the church, especially since the research project found its conception there. In mid-February, the evaluation team and the youth met for the first time for its orientation session. At this session, the research project's objectives and structure were outlined, and the importance of the youths' participation throughout the research project was addressed. The youth consented to give their full participation. The evaluation team presented and discussed the necessity for a Health Questionnaire (see Appendix C) to determine the youths' suitability for the research project and a "Confidentiality Statement and Consent Form" (see Appendix D) was also bought forward, where the "Rights and Responsibilities" of both the youth and evaluation team were explained. Those "Rights and Responsibilities" were related to the American Counseling Association's (ACA) Code of Ethics.[1] The youth appeared to be reasonably healthy as indicated on their Health Questionnaire, and all parties signed a "Confidentiality Statement and Consent Form." The administration of the pre-questionnaire, spiritual autobiography questions, and

[1] Barbara Herlihy and Gerald Corey. *ACA Ethical Casebook,6th ed.*,(Alexandria, Virginia: American Counseling Association, 2006) 133-136.

questions concerning career and educational goals, and religion-spirituality assessment were issued, and responded to by the youth. The evaluation team took the information and assessed the youth's psychological, emotional and spiritual development. The youths' responses provided for the evaluation team a general assessment and direction for the counseling process. From the data, the youth presented a number of issues that they were dealing with such as self-esteem, anger management and aggression, loss and separation, decision-making and coping skills, sexual orientation, familial problems and peer pressure to enumerate a few. The evaluation team felt that the next course of action that could best serve the youth would be a visual aid, which reflected the concept of the research project, dealt with a number of the issues identified in the lives of the youth and how they were resolved.

Session Two

The resource tool utilized during this Phase that had a practical application was a movie entitled *Antwone Fisher* (see Appendix E), which not only addressed some of the issues of the youth, but also served as the basis of a real-life situation where unresolved issues were discovered, addressed and resolved. It should also be noted that the context associates selected several of the movies that they believed would be applicable and beneficial to the lives of the youth (see Appendix F). From the movie *Antwone Fisher*, the evaluation team and youth discussed several of the issues that were brought out in the movie, in particular anger management and aggression, and loss and separation. The youth spent a great deal of time in the presentation of personal testimonies where they

discussed how they lost their tempers and how the situations could have been handled differently, the separation of a father from their household, and the destruction of a livelihood caused by Hurricane Katrina to enumerate a few concerns. As it related to anger management and aggression, the evaluation team informed the youth that it was their hope and expectation that the youth would learn to make better choices "in the heat of the battle because there could be serious consequences levied against them" and that "losses and separation were a by-product of the human condition." The hurt and pain from those experiences, however, could be overcome. The youth continued to express different emotions and opinions about their "anger" that led to constructive dialogue and uninhibited discussions. At the conclusion of the session, the evaluation team gave the youth a questionnaire (see Appendix G) about the movie *Antwone Fisher*, so that the evaluation team could learn more about the youth.

Session Three

After sessions one and two proved to be productive, informative and effective, the evaluation team decided the next step would be a one-on-one interview to further personalize each youth's experience that would ultimately identify their unresolved issues and personal struggles, and provide answers that would be used to construct a personal profile of each youth (see Appendix H). Once the personal profiles were completed, the evaluation team identified each youth by an alphabet (Youth A, Youth B, and Youth C) to preserve their personal identity, evaluated their profiles and sent their personal profiles to the professional associates for their own personal assessments and recommendations.

The evaluation team felt that it was important at this point in the research project to clarify the best direction the research project should take, especially since the evaluation team concluded that "self-disclosure" had successfully been accomplished.

Upon reflection on the self-disclosure intervention, the youth in each of their interviews were able to release (by talking about it) some of the hurt and pain that they felt. They were able to share their experiences from different perspectives. While in conversation, the evaluation team reiterated to the youth that through the research project's orientation session, the movie "*Antwone Fisher,*" and the one-on-one interview, that the possibilities of healing and wholeness would eventually come as they exposed themselves to the realities of their own interpersonal struggles. During the research project's orientation session, it consisted of two pre-questionnaires, one dealing with self-esteem, anger management and aggression and familial issues, and the other questionnaire dealing with career and education as well as religion-spirituality issues (see Appendix A). The evaluation team chose to address those issues in the pre-questionnaire based on their experiences in dealing with young people in general. The orientation session also had the youth write their spiritual autobiography, which would serve as an assessment of possible crisis in their life and to obtain data concerning their relationship with God (see Appendix B).

The use of this information would be vital and significant to the youths' healing and wholeness because it established the reasons a spiritual guide for healing and wholeness ought to be developed for young males. The input from the professional associates was timely and significant to the research project at this point because the youth had begun to

identify their own hurt and pain, through primary or shared issues of self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation.

The information from Phase One of the research project would be used to assist the evaluation team in "Phase Two: "During Self-Disclosure"" to address not only their primary issues, but also to identify other issues in their lives, and to determine other resource tools and approaches that could be utilized for healing in the subsequent sessions.

B. Phase Two: "During Self-Disclosure"

Since self-disclosure had been achieved (session one thru session three), which represented Phase One of the research project, the evaluation team decided it would narrow its focus on three crisis areas that were shared and primary issues in the lives of each youth — self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation. Moreover, the evaluation team would also talk to each individual youth about their secondary issues that were peculiar to that youth such as sexual orientation, decision-making and coping skills, social relationship problems and parenting concerns. Each of the professional associates agreed with the evaluations team's assessment of the youths' hurt and pain, both past and present, based on their profiles (see Appendix H) gained through the one-on-one interview. In addition, the professional associates recommended that the evaluation team maintain the use of the resource tools that took both a theological approach and practical application to remedy those issues in the lives of the youth.

After much discussion, the evaluation team concluded that it would use biblical principles and scriptures in relation to real life situations as the theological approach, and

the Person-centered and Adlerian theoretical counseling approaches, along with a variety of resource tools, to be used as the practical application, to assist the youth on their journey to overcome their crisis (healing) so that they likewise would be able to make a similar effort to help others (wholeness). Furthermore, in the field experience, the evaluation team decided to alternate each session, where one session would be from a theological approach and the next session had a practical application and so forth.

The evaluation team recognized that the process from crisis to healing did not come overnight. But, like a caterpillar's cocoon, the healing process required time, a knowledgeable staff, a supportive group and several therapeutic sessions to keep the youths' psychological, emotional and spiritual eyes focused on their hurt and pain, so that they would be able to face it, grieve it and resolve it. Henri Nouwen, in his book, *Wounded Healer,* helps one to understand the healing process for change, "His goal is not a better man, but a new man, a man who relates to himself and his world in ways which are still unexplored but which belong to his hidden potentials. The life of this man is not ruled by manipulation…but is ruled by love and supported by new ways of interpersonal communication".[2]

Therefore, the process towards healing represented Phase Two (session four thru session twelve) or "during self-disclosure", of the research project. The researcher highlighted the salient points of incidents that occurred in each session.

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[2]Henri J.M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer* (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1972), 18.

Session Four

The evaluation team started session four with a practical application. The resource tool used was a group therapy session to aid the youth in their understanding of the expectations from the research project, which was to face their own hurt and pain, talk to the evaluation team, follow the suggested recommendations of the evaluation team and to support others in a similar manner in the future. From the outset in this session, the youth appeared to be more relaxed in that they were more talkative to each other and the evaluation team, with the exception of Youth A. He appeared to be withdrawn, inattentive by looking downward and anxious for the session to terminate.

After the opening remarks by the researcher, the next topic of discussion was the movie, *Antwone Fisher,* from session two, and their responses on a questionnaire that had been given to them for a homework assignment almost a week ago (see Appendix G). All the youth agreed that the movie helped them to understand the overall objectives of the research project. Once the researcher opened the floor for discussion about the issues that the youth shared, which included self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation, all of the youth made comments about how those issues manifested themselves throughout the movie. Moreover, the movie also served as a bridge from prompting discussions about the movie to focus on discussions about them and their life experiences. As one youth talked about his life experiences and freely shared information, the other youth began to do likewise. From those lively and spirited discussions that were heard earlier about the movie, the youth poured out their hearts about their own personal hurt and pain. There was more than enough hurt and pain to go

around. It seemed like the youth forgot where they were, and they shared experience after experience without any reservation. The evaluation team occasionally interjected questions of concern and encouraged the youth to continue to talk about their hurt and pain. Since there had been such a release of emotions about their past and present hurt and pains, the evaluation team allowed the session to proceed thirty minutes longer.

Session Five

In this session, the evaluation team focused on a theological approach and used as a resource tool the Word of God, and choose "The Cain and Abel Story" (Genesis 4:1-17), which was more graphic in its description of their primary issues of self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation. Again, the youth were not at a loss for traumatic experiences that they had encountered and affected their lives. The evaluation team allowed the youth time to face those experiences by asking them "how did it make them feel then, and how does it make them feel today?"

The biblical theme from this story that caused an eye-opener and excitement for the youth was God giving Cain a second chance to live a meaningful and purposeful life, in spite of the murder he had committed. In addition, the evaluation team was amazed at the biblical ignorance of the youth because they not only attended church frequently, but also the youth could vaguely recall this story and could only remember that Cain did kill Abel, and that Cain answered God's question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The evaluation team had the youth fill-out a questionnaire on "The Cain and Abel Story" (see Appendix I), and asked questions to the youth that were generated by the context associates (see

Appendix J), which helped in the production of more informative and inquisitive responses by the youth during the session. During the question and answer period, Youth A stated that "...if Cain murdered Abel, and God gave him a second chance, then there is hope for me." At first, the evaluation team thought that was an errant remark in relationship to the discussion about God giving Cain a second chance, but at the next session, those words of Youth A became a surprising reality.

Session Six

The evaluation team began this session, and those thereafter, by briefly highlighting the purpose and objectives of the research project. It was important for the evaluation team to keep the youth focused and interested in the research project. Again, to reinforce the intent of the overall research project, the resource tool, a movie entitled, *America*, was shown (see Appendix K), which was a practical application, to serve again as a visual aid for the youth. A questionnaire (see Appendix L) concerning the movie was administered to the youth at that session. The evaluation team again lifted their primary issues of self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation from the movie. Again, the youth had a lively and spirited discussion about the movie, agreed that it helped them to further understand the research project, and continued to talk about their own personal experiences. In addition, Youth A made an announcement to the group that he had given his life to Christ Jesus and joined the church because he was anxious and wanted to discover what God wants him to do in his life, especially since God had given him a second chance. The evaluation team was elated because Youth A's experiences

with the research project had an effect in his life, and his response indicated that elements from the research project lingered in his life's experiences. All the participants were happy for Youth A as they applauded and hugged him, and shook

Session Seven

(Part One)

The evaluation team felt it was time for another theological approach through a Bible study to reinforce biblical principles through the Word of God. Subsequently, the Bible lesson that had been selected was "The Story of Joseph and his Brothers "(Genesis 37; and 45:1-15). Due to the length of those biblical narratives and the importance of the life application lessons, the evaluation team separated the story into two parts, Genesis 37 being the first part and the second part being Genesis 45:1-15. Again, the evaluation team applied biblical principles from these stories and related them to the youths' real life situations and their primary issues of self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation. In addition, the questions that were given to the youth for discussion were those formulated by the context associates (see Appendix J). Once again, the evaluation team was surprised at the biblical ignorance of the youth because majority of them vaguely recalled hearing this biblical story. The evaluation team encouraged the youth not only to attend the Sunday morning worship service, but also to participate in Sunday school and Bible study more frequently. Consequently, they would not only be students of the Word of God, but also their faith would be strengthened and increased in God.

The evaluation team had to make a difficult decision about one of the youth, Youth D. This had been his fourth session that he had missed, due to an unpredictable work schedule and his mother having to take him out of town with her for personal matters. For the evaluation team, if anyone could have benefited from this research project, it would have been Youth D. The researcher had information concerning Youth D through his mother, who had stated that he had joined a gang, used drugs and drank alcohol, had several brushes with the law for ungovernable behavior and involved in a couple of physical encounters with her. Nevertheless, to maintain the integrity and authenticity of the research project, each session had a significant impact on the psychological, emotional and spiritual welfare for each youth. Thus, Youth D was dropped from the research project. Also in this session, the other youth had formed a bond with Youth D from church, school and the research project and they were very disappointed that he had to be dropped. This incident, however, turned into a learning tool in that the consequences of one's actions dictated what kinds of decisions could be made against a person. Again, the youth were candid and open concerning self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation issues in their lives. The evaluation team noted how the youth felt comfortable and confident about those things they shared about their experiences. Here, for the evaluation team, it was clear from the outset that an environment of uninhibited dialogue had been successfully created and sustained.

Session Eight

(Part Two)

In this session, the evaluation team took both a theological approach and a practical application in the use of resource tools, a Bible study and a rap session, respectively. Here the research project had almost reached its mid-point and the evaluation team concluded that this would be a good time to reward the youth for their participation by having another learning session, along with fun and relaxation at a local pizza restaurant of the youths' own choosing. The evaluation team took a theological approach by first using a Bible study as the resource tool. The session began with a recap of the previous session's Bible study of "The Story of Joseph and his Brothers" (Genesis 37), along with a reminder of the biblical principles that addressed the primary issues of the research project. This set the stage and tone for this session's Bible lesson of Genesis 45:1-15. Again, the evaluation team was amazed at the biblical ignorance of the youth in that they were not familiar with the second part of "The Story of Joseph and his Brothers ". The evaluation team once again encouraged the youth to attend Sunday school and Bible study for biblical knowledge and to increase their faith in God. The questions that were used to generate the discussion between the evaluation team and the youth were those formulated by the context associates (see Appendix J). Here again, the evaluation team emphasized biblical principles that addressed hurt and pain, similar to the youth's experiences, as they related to self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation. For the youth, the discussion in part two, concerning forgiveness, played a major role in the Bible study because the youth found it hard to forgive someone that

they could not stand and who had harmed them and/or their family. The evaluation team reminded the youth that Jesus Christ died on Calvary for our sins, and that he forgave even those, who trumped-up false charges and crucified him, as well as each one of us because in some way today we still crucify him through our refusal to trust and obey the Word of God. Therefore, forgiveness is an unexpected and undeserved act extended from one person to the next as an expression of reconciliation that occurs as a result of one's relationship with Christ.

At the conclusion of the Bible study, the evaluation team and the youth dined at a local pizzeria. The evaluation team examined the social bonding and interaction of the youth in public, gathered further information about their hurt and pain, and gauged the impact the research project had on them. Youth A talked about how it was good to be away from the house because he did not have an opportunity to do fun things like the rap session. Youth C discussed how he missed being with his friends in New Orleans because they used to do things similar to that function after football practice. Youth B started out with the group in the earlier Bible study. But later, he had to dismiss himself from the group to help his family with a housing emergency that occurred as a result of flooding.

Session Nine

The evaluation team continued to apply resource tools and felt it necessary at this point to include another practical application in the form of a movie entitled *"Decisions"* (see Appendix M) to reinforce the overall objectives of the research project. This movie emphasized the research project's primary issues of self-esteem, anger management and

aggression, and loss and separation. In addition, the movie helped to point out the significance of relationships and the fact that every decision that one makes in life builds-up to the quality of life that one lives. After the conclusion of the movie, the youth had a lively and spirited discussion about decisions that they had made, and how fortunate they were that God protected them and gave them a second chance at life. The evaluation team also taught the youth how relationships mattered in one's effort to do the Lord's work.

Session Ten

The evaluation team made the decision to go back to a theological approach by using the resource tool of a Bible study. For the evaluation team, the Bible study had proven to be an effective resource tool in that the youth agreed that the biblical principles seemed to be talking directly to them and their situations. The Bible study for this session that was selected had been "The Prophet Ezekiel and the Valley of Dry Bones" (Ezekiel 37:1-14). Here, the discussion about the maintenance of relationships became the central theme for the evaluation team as well as for the youth. For instance, Youth A shared with the group that he had an anger management and aggression issue at school where someone talked behind his back about his sexual orientation. Youth A further stated that he went out of control in that he threw desks and chairs across the classroom, screamed and shouted, and eventually was arrested by the police for disorderly conduct. The group used this incident as a learning tool to discuss alternative ways that Youth A could have handled the situation. Youth B talked about his lack of patience with people and being put "in the middle of mending their mistakes", and how he purposely avoided those students who

had personal problems because "he had his own problems to deal with." The evaluation team found out that he was dyslexia, and even had to take a speech therapy class when he relocated from New Jersey to Alabama so that he could be understood. And Youth C discussed how he could not get along with his stepfather (who did eight years in prison for armed robbery) because he was lazy, wanted something for nothing, and did not provide for the family as a man ought. The evaluation team concluded from those discussions that more emphasis would be placed on relationships between self, others and God.

Session Eleven

The evaluation team conducted interviews by talking with the youth one-on-one to show where they were, how far they had come and how their symptoms had been reduced. Moreover, the evaluation team concluded that the youth's journey from a theological and clinical perspective had been achieved in making the youth face their own hurt and pain, to talk about their own grief, and that the interview session would help them to do something further about their crisis. In the interview sessions, some of the elements that the evaluation team dealt with were: (a) the evaluation team restated the hurt and pain of the youth that was indentified during the first interview and to assess what the youth was feeling at that particular time; (b) the evaluation team presented questions to see if the youth followed-up on the recommendations made to them from the first interview; (c) the evaluation team identified the growth and development that it saw in a particular youth and that youth could attest that he had made a change in his life; and (d) the evaluation team presented further recommendations to the youth to help them to

continue to deal with primary and secondary issues in their lives. Those interviews for the evaluation team had been pressure-packed because the youth expressed emotional release, victorious testimonies and spiritual excitement. Yes, the evaluation team could confirm that those youth had come a long way from the beginning of the research project to that moment in time.

C. Phase Three: "After Self-Disclosure"

For the evaluation team, Phase Two, which represents "during self-disclosure", was reached. The evaluation team again used Person-centered and Adlerian theoretical counseling approaches to activate the healing process for the youth as "...therapy aims to develop social interest, change faulty thinking, help clients overcome feelings of inferiority and discouragement, and become motivated to participate fully in social systems."[3]

For Phase Three, which represent "after self-disclosure", the evaluation team saw the need to provide further direction, and empowerment and encouragement for the youth. This effort was achieved during session twelve thru session eighteen. Again, the evaluation team wanted to keep a balance between a theological approach and practical application in the use of resource tools.

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[3] Barbara F. Okun, *Effective Helping: Interviewing and Counseling Techniques, 5th edition,* (Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Pub. Comp., 1997), 117.

Session Twelve

The evaluation team started with a practical application to get the youth focused on the research project. Then, the evaluation team came up with the notion that for twelve sessions the youth had seen their faces and heard their voices, so now was the time to implement a different resource tool, a workshop. The evaluation team contacted the Huntsville Police Department's Public Relation's office and was able to secure Officer Bob Cornelison (See Appendix N). He agreed to talk on a variety of issues, in particular the primary issues that the evaluation team and professional associates acknowledged, which were self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation. Officer Cornelison appeared to be on one accord with the evaluation team because he echoed and reinforced numerous themes that had already been stated. The youth enjoyed Officer Cornelison's presentation because he was quite frank, informative and spoke in a "street language" that the youth clearly understood.

Session Thirteen

In this session, the evaluation team focused on a theological approach through the resource tool of a Bible study. The evaluation team selected the biblical story of "The Parable of the Prodigal Son" (Luke 15:11-24). Again, the evaluation team was surprised about the biblical ignorance of the youth. Even though they had heard the parable, they could not recall its content or meaning other than "a pigpen". Once again, the evaluation team encouraged the youth to participate in Sunday school and Bible study so that they

could be informed with biblical knowledge and principles, and strengthen in their faith in God. The youth again had a lively and spirited discussion about this biblical story because it was easy for them to identify with the prodigal son, especially with him doing his own thing and recklessly living life. But, they could not relate to him when he lost everything through bad decisions because they could not see themselves just throwing away financial resources for pleasures and amenities of the world. Nevertheless, the evaluation team had been able to reinforce biblical principles as they related to the research project's primary issues of self esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation, along with some of the secondary issues of finding purpose and meaning in life, and decision-making skills. Again, the questions that were used to generate discussions were formulated by the context associates (see Appendix J).

Session Fourteen

The evaluation team drew its attention on a practical application through the resource tool of a movie. The evaluation team once again wanted to highlight its overall objectives of the research project through a visual aid. The emphasis, however, was placed on the fact that any unresolved issues that were presently in the lives of the youth now would continue to follow them into adulthood, as it had done the researcher. Consequently, the movie that was selected to punctuate this theme was *Prince of Tides* (see Appendix O). The primary issues of the research project, which were self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation, were quite prevalent, provocative and persuasive in the movie. The movie appeared to be a "rude awakening" for the youth because as

Youth B stated, "I don't want to carry any baggage with me when I get old". Even though the content of the movie was periodically strong and graphic, the youth were able to identify with it because as one youth observed, "it happens all the time nowadays." The discussions with the youth touched a variety of issues such as self-esteem, anger management and aggression, family secrets, decision-making, maintenance of relationships, and hurt and pain.

Session Fifteen

The evaluation team could see the research project coming to an end because many of the objectives had been achieved. Subsequently, the evaluation team chose a practical application to bring everyone on one accord through the resource tool of a group therapy. The evaluation team began to assess whether the overall objectives had been met and goals attained. At the conclusion of session eleven, from the one-on-one interviews, the evaluation team could tell that the primary issues of self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation of the youth were minimized in comparison to their starting point of the research project. Some of the evidences of this fact were behavioral and communication changes of the youth in some of the later sessions, and then the youth testified that they took the recommendations of the evaluation team, applied them and favorable results could be seen in their relationships with others as well as with the church and God. In this session, a group therapy, the evaluation team began to bring closure to the research project. The researcher discussed with the youth the overall

objectives of the research project and how they had been achieved, referred back to the previous session on how important it was to deal with unresolved grief, expressed to the youth how he had witnessed changes in each of their lives, and how they had expressed a sense of relief to that change. For the evaluation team and youth, the discussions on the transforming events and the youths' testimonials became the highlight for the group therapy session. For instance, Youth A stated that he felt more confident about himself and that God had a special plan in his life that only he and no one else could do. Youth B stated that he had opened-up more to others rather than to run away from them because they had personal problems. He also stated that some advice he had given to a couple of friends was helpful to them. Youth C discussed how he had gone back to his father, talked about how he told his father he was wrong when he had abandoned the family, and that he did not hold any hard feelings towards his father. Even his father gave his own testimony to Youth C about what went on during that time. But despite this wrong, Youth C was able to let his anger go and forgive him. The researcher must note that at the beginning of the research project, Youth C testified that he "would never forgive his father in this life-time for messing-up with the family because he (Youth C) could not work-up the courage to confront his father." Again this session was filled with high emotions and signs of relief.

Session Sixteen

The evaluation team concluded that it would choose the resource tool of another workshop to aid the youth in the helping process. The mental health counselor from the evaluation team conducted the workshop, which came from a practical application. She emphasized the importance of reflection and self-reflection, and that the youth were equipped with a variety of resource tools that could assist them in this effort such as the Word of God, attendance in community workshops with similar themes as the research project, and/or the continued development of that youth's spiritual autobiography. In addition, the mental health counselor further used reflection and self-reflection as a training tool to demonstrate to the youth its positive effects on self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation through the use of questionnaires (see Appendix P) and further dialogue. For the mental health counselor, reflection and self-reflection allowed the youth to think on how they viewed each other at the beginning of the research project and how they viewed each other at the close of the research project. Self-reflection served the same purpose, only this reflection was of a personal nature, which allowed the youths to reflect upon their past issues, while focusing on how far each one of them had come. The reflection and self-reflection taught the boys how to critique constructively each other while being honest and with positive regards for the feelings of each other. The session created an atmosphere which allowed the youth to share a common bond in that each one realized they had unresolved issues in their lives that needed to be dealt with. With this in mind, the youth were able to see the importance of resolving issues, both personally and through shared experiences with others.

Session Seventeen

The evaluation team conducted exit interviews by talking with the youth one-on-one to show where they were, how far they had come, and how their symptoms had been reduced. Moreover, the evaluation team concluded that the youths' journey for healing, from a theological and clinical perspective, had been achieved by making the youth face and acknowledge their own hurt and pain, to dialogue about that hurt and pain, and that the previous interview sessions had helped them, physically, to do something about their hurt and pain. In the interview session, some of the elements that the evaluation team dealt with were: (a) the evaluation team restated the hurt and pain of the youth that was indentified during the first interview, and to find-out and assess what they were feeling at that particular point in time; (b) the evaluation team presented questions to see if the youth followed-up on the recommendations made to them from the first and second interviews; (c) the evaluation team indentified the growth that it saw in a particular youth and that youth could attest that changes had been made in his life; and (d) the evaluation team presented further recommendations to the youth to help them continue to deal with primary and secondary issues in their lives. Those interviews for the evaluation team had been pressure-packed, especially when the youth expressed emotional release, victorious testimonies and spiritual excitement. Yes, the evaluation team could confirm that those youth had come a long way from the beginning of the research project to that moment in time.

Session Eighteen

The evaluation team used the final session from both a theological approach and practical application through the resource tool of a panel discussion. At the commencement of this session, the evaluation team gave the youth a post-questionnaire (see Appendix Q). Following this, the evaluation team allowed the context associates: (a) to participate and be involved with the youth and the evaluation team by asking questions concerning the overall research project; (b) to ask any biblical questions of the youth that they formulated (see Appendix J); (c) to examine through the questions the growth and development of the youth from the research project; and (d) to grant opportunity for the context associates to ask additional questions, give advice and/or further counseling to the youth. During the panel discussion, the researcher introduced the context associates, mental health counselor, and youth to all parties involved, talked about the nature and overall objectives of the research project, highlighted the successes of the research project and commended the youth for their commitment to the research project. The evaluation team selected another movie entitled, *Grace and Mercy* (see Appendix R), whose primary intent allowed the youth and context associates to see an inspirational movie together, and where a theological approach and practical application drew together to present a positive outcome, and then presented further dialogue. The evaluation team provided refreshments and acknowledged the youth for their participation with a promise of a Bible and certificate.

Finally as the context associates were concluding the session with their advice and words of encouragement, one of them asked the youth to name at least one benefit of the

research project for their lives. All three responded in the affirmative that their primary issues of self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation had been grieved and dealt with, as well as several secondary issues of decision-making and coping skills were presented that had a tremendous effect on their self-perception, relationships to others, and involvement with God.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTION, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In reflection, when the researcher arrived at his context, Grady-Madison African Methodist Episcopal Church in Madison, Alabama as the newly appointed pastor, in December, 2007, the research project came into conception the moment he greeted the young males who were involved and participated in the research project. Three prevalent themes presented themselves even before the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness activated itself.

The first theme was an environment where dialogue between the researcher and youth had to be forged and fostered. From the outset, two sayings ring true as they relate to the research project's beginning stage. The first saying, "The first impression leaves a lasting impression." And the second saying states, "Sometimes you don't get a second chance to make a first impression." Many of the youth today are observant and perceptive of other persons' feelings and attitudes toward them. In some cases, if there is any sign or suspicion from the initiator of being judgmental, hypocritical and/or "just going through the motions", the youth will shield their hurt and pain within themselves or even totally close-up, only to make the process for their growth and development psychologically, emotionally and spiritually either delayed or nearly impossible. An intimate relationship that is developed and maintained with a youth does not occur overnight. But time must be invested in the relationship because the youth is always "sizing you up" and vice-versa. The researcher has spent an inordinate amount of time on this point of an "initial encounter" with a youth because this seemingly simple, yet single-most element was

most substantial and crucial for the success and effectiveness in the development of the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness. The researcher knew first hand this to be true. When he failed to grieve the loss of his mother as an adolescent, the researcher discovered that he had hidden his hurt and pain deep in the core of his existence, but they manifested themselves visibly in his mistrust and devaluation of the significance of women in his relationships. After going through counseling in a Clinical Pastoral Education program; however, it took nearly a year for him to open-up and share his hurt and pain with peers and mentors that eventually led to his liberation.

A second theme that sprung forth before the research project took root was that the researcher could not assume within his congregation that youth, in general, and young African American males, in particular, were able to resolve, reasonably and rationally, conflict within their lives. During the late seventies, when the researcher had been a teenager, life seemed to follow a pattern of ebb and flow, in that there were relative victories and defeats, successes and failures, and comforts and hurts. Life as a teenager appeared to be so simple. The researcher's generation was confronted with problems and seemed to have dealt with them. But today, the rapidity and intensity of problems seem to have sky-rocketed for these youth. For some teenage African American males, and the researcher's congregation was no different, the notion of crisis, chaos and confusion seemed to be "the rule" for the youth, rather than "the exception". In dealing with the youth in the research project, for instance, the researcher discovered that the youth were constantly wrestling with the hurt and pain of numerous issues, both past and present, such as alienation and separation, self-esteem and sexual orientation, anger and aggression, and parental parochialism and lack of parental support to enumerate a few.

Moreover, some young males were not grounded ethically, morally or theologically. Consequently, the voices of other world views left them perplexed and potentially participating in dangerous and destructive activities such as satanic worship, gang culture, tobacco, drug and alcohol abuse, rebellion against authority and so forth. Therefore, the researcher admonishes every pastor not to assume that the young people she/he views from the pulpit have situations in their lives as being moderately manageable and under control. But the pastor must become actively involved in their lives to get a glimpse of issues that their youth face daily and how they rectify those matters.

And a third theme that stood out before the research project took shape was that the pastor must work hard to develop the spiritual dimension within the lives of young males. It was through the researcher's experience and understanding that many youth today failed to nurture their spiritual person or even to be aware that he possessed one. Even the Apostle Paul recognized the undernourishment of the spirit of some of those persons in the church communities, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not meat: for hitherto you were not able to bear it…" (1 Cor. 3:1-2, KJV). All of the young male participants in the research project talked about spiritual emptiness and a lack of spiritual guidance, and concluded that they either do not understand what church is, the necessity for being a part of a church, and/or the significance of God's relationship to their lives. Those teenaged males in the research project were ready to catapult themselves into adulthood with the mindset that spirituality, as it related to God, was irrelevant in their lives, even though they themselves frequently went to church. Again, every pastor ought

to focus on and not neglect the spiritual growth and development of their youth, in terms of their self-identity, maintenance of relationships, coping skills in decision-making, and anger management and aggression, and utilization of their gifts, skills, talents and good will for the welfare of humanity.

In short, even before the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness could be constructed, a pastor should bring these items with her/him beforehand: (a) must establish a healthy and working relationship with the youth; (b) cannot assume that the youth in her/his congregation can reasonably and rationally manage conflict in their lives; and (c) make a part of her/his agenda to focus on the spiritual enrichment, growth and development of the youth within the congregation. Without these prerequisites, a pastor's effort to reform or liberate a youth from hurt and pain through the use of "the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness" will almost be futile.

In summary, the hypothesis of the research project states that if a church constructs a safe haven for youth to have uninhibited dialogue about their hurt and pain, then strength and vitality will be established within their psychological, emotional and physical development to provide the necessary tools to bring balance in their lives. To test the validity and creditability of the hypothesis, the researcher adopted a qualitative research method approach to build a spiritual guide for healing and wholeness. The primary features in the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness were fivefold.

The first feature in the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness was the researcher (pastor) who played a primary and central role. First, a pastor not only assumes a leadership and coordinator role in this effort, but also must be academically trained both in pastoral ministry as well as in pastoral care and counseling. This is not an elitist model

of ministry, but an admonition and plea for pastors to be alert and prepared for crisis that overshadows and indwells a parishioner's life and/or household. Furthermore, the reasons for being academically trained in both pastoral ministry and in pastoral care and counseling are not to insult those who do not have a professional degree, but to raise the bar and standards for equipping and arming pastors to be viable resources to combat the challenges that a technocratic, post-modern and Information Age bring as an onslaught for the demise and destruction of churches, in general, and youth, in particular. Congregants have become knowledgeable and informative these days through their use and interaction on computers and the Internet. Some pastors find themselves handicapped, paralyzed and ill-equipped to respond to congregants' questions, concerns and needs. In addition, the researcher witnessed other pastors, who lacked a professional degree in ministry and/or counseling, in their zeal to bring resolve to a layperson's dilemma, they became more opinionated and judgmental both in their (pastors) interpretation of the Holy Scriptures and the needs of the person in crisis. Even the Holy Writ, in both the Old and New Testaments, indicts the prophetic leadership in meeting the needs of God's people, on the one hand, and endorses a trained ministry, on the other. In the Old Testament, the Word of God teaches us, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because You hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me…" (Hosea 4:6, KJV). And in the New Testament, the Word of God also teaches us, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15, KJV). Furthermore, young males today seem to find themselves dealing with issues such as peer pressure, sexual orientation, a variety of relationships, a sense of meaninglessness and

purposelessness in life to enumerate a few, which could result in many forms of deviant behaviors. And to resolve effectively those situations, this research project argues that a pastor, who is academically trained and prepared, along with their love, nurture and care, can be resourceful in combating crisis conditions that arise among their young members. The Word of God, pastoral ministry, and pastoral care and counseling are not diametrically opposed nor mutually exclusive, but they compliment each other, at best, to be sensitive to persons and their condition, to be less opinionated and judgmental about perplexing circumstances that arise in the lives of God's people, and to be efficacious in bringing positive and liberating resolve and recovery to that person's condition. Second, along with the researcher's training, it also should be noted that the researcher had to create and maintain a positive and approachable environment every time so that the youth would feel free to have uninhibited dialogue. Enough has already been highlighted about the "initial encounter" and its significance between those persons involved in this research project. Nevertheless, believe it or not, counseling was an ongoing task between the researcher and youth. This also was a crucial step because if the researcher could not establish and maintain a working relationship with the youth, then the other features in the research project would have been inept, impotent, and ineffective to reach out to the hurt and pain of the young males. It was very important to establish rapport between the researcher and young males because it was necessary for those youth to search within themselves, open-up to their own hurt and pain, and allow the grieving process to manifest itself. And once the grieving process was activated, the youth were able to begin to grow and develop to their potential, and have meaningful relationships with self, others and God. And third, through both his academic training and ability to create an

environment where dialogue between the researcher and youth could be generated, the researcher could implement a course of action towards healing and wholeness. Here the researcher was able to organize a theoretical counseling approach(s), select resource tools that would be used to make contact with a youth's hurt and pain, and then to evaluate and place the youth on a road of resolve and recovery

A second feature in the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness was an evaluation team. From the outset of the research project, the researcher (pastor) and a skilled clinician (mental health counselor) in the field of psychology and counseling, worked together. Here, the theological (pastor's perspective) and the practical (clinician's perspective) were forged together to assist each other to be more effective and communicative in the analysis of the youth's crisis (hurt and pain), to be better informed about the evaluation of that crisis, and then to make recommendations for the relief of that crisis through both a theological and clinical interpretation. By the researcher having a foundation in pastoral care and counseling, he was equipped to dialogue with the clinician on various levels of the youth's condition, along with therapeutic approaches and techniques to remedy the youths' crisis situations. Moreover, for our research project, the evaluation team could have had a number of other persons on the team, but a specific consideration must be made to have always at least a pastor and a clinician on the evaluation team to keep a healthy balance between a theological approach and a practical application.

And the third feature in the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness was a supporting cast, the context and professional associates, or an interdisciplinary team. A well-known African proverb states, "It takes a village to raise a child". The evaluation team turned to

the context associates for assistance in the selection of movies, aid in the formulation of biblical questions for the four Bible studies, and help in their input for the panel discussion. Moreover, the context associates were members of the church whom the researcher trusted with information and could depend on them to give positive feedback to the youth. The context associates also had personal and pertinent information and references about the lives of the youth, but they themselves could never find a proper forum to discuss those matters of concern with the youth. The research project, however, presented that opportunity and the context associates did not come short of their expectations that the researcher invested in them. The context associates went beyond the call of duty in terms of timeliness, nurture, expertise and support. In addition, the professional associates assisted the evaluation team in terms of their assessments to aid in the identification of the youths' hurt and pain, in the selection of the movies, as well as their advice for the youths' liberation from their hurt and pain to a road of resolve and recovery.

A fourth feature of the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness was a theoretical counseling approach. The evaluation team, which was comprised of two persons, selected a Person-centered and Adlerian theoretical counseling approach for the research project. As it relates to the team, in this research project one member represented a theological approach (researcher) and the other person represented a practical application (clinician), so that there were checks and balances throughout the research project. Even though any theoretical counseling approach could have been selected, this evaluation team made its decision based on their familiarity with those counseling techniques, and the

manageability, practicality, timeliness and effectiveness of those theoretical counseling approaches for the research project.

And the fifth feature in the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness was the use of a variety of resource tools. The evaluation team selected numerous resource tools for two reasons. One reason was to have a punctuating effect to attack and expose the hurt and pain of a youth from a variety of angles, so that self-discovery could be realized. There were a variety of angles or eighteen sessions that took place, and they entailed the following resource tools: a panel discussion, one-on-one interviews, group therapy, a rap session, Bible study, movies and workshops. And then the other reason for using a variety of resource tools was to make the research project interesting and exciting for the parties involved. From the evaluation team's previous experience in working with youth, they quickly get bored with doing the same thing over and over again, and have a tendency not to stay focus and pay attention.

Finally, once the five features were in place to act interchangeably, the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness became activated and took form in three phases of "self-disclosure" (before, during and after). Moreover, with the interaction of these five features, they proved the validity and creditability of the research project to be effective, successful and a worthwhile investment for the researcher as well as any pastor who wants to adopt it, and who cares about the welfare of young African American males.

In conclusion, the effectiveness and success of the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness was defined, illuminated, and presented at the eighteenth session of the research project, which was a panel discussion. Here the context associates participated with the youth, and asked them biblical questions from the Cain and Abel story, the

Joseph and his brothers story, and the Parable of the Prodigal Son, watched a movie entitled *Grace and Mercy,* feasted on sandwiches, chips, and ice tea, and witnessed the youth being showered with words of accolades and promises that their own Bible and certificates were forthcoming. At the close of this session, however, one of the context associates asked each one of the youth quite candidly, "If the research project helped them. And if so, name one way." The responses and testimonials of each youth indicated that this effort had been an invaluable experience and a worthwhile investment. For Youth A, he responded, "I had a very violent temper at the beginning of the research project, and I kept getting in trouble. I was on the verge of getting kicked-out of school if I could not control my temper. This research project has helped me to minimize my temper, and to think more about the consequences of my actions, rather than to get tied-up into my feelings." Here is the response of a youth who began the research project wearing a black hooded jacket with the hood over his head, black fingernail polish, heavy black eye liner and adorned in all black attire because he was ashamed of how he appeared to others and the black covering made him feel like he was in the shadows. But at this session, he had bright colors on and permitted the world to see him, as he was, not ashamed of himself. Youth A also remarked that he had been undergoing counseling at the high school, and he started to treat the research project in a similar manner, which was to give the counselor the information he wanted to hear rather than giving him the truth and information that would help liberate him. Then he said this about the research project, "I saw that the evaluation team did not judge nor condemn me. They treated me as a human being and it did not matter how I looked or acted; so I could not help but open-up to people who were really trying to help me". Youth B answered the context

associates question in this manner, "The research project has helped me to understand the importance of relationships, rather than to always run away from people who brought their problems to me. And where I didn't take God seriously before, in that I just went through the motions of going to church, I now start and conclude each day focusing on how God has been with me throughout the day." This was a response from a youth who began the research project by bragging on how he would put himself in harms way and intentionally avoided relationships because he "did not want to be bogged-down with other people's problems." And Youth C remarked, "I have learned to open-up more, and express and share my feelings, especially towards people who care about me, like my church family." And here was a youth, who at the beginning of the research project made no apologies for his anger and strong dislike towards his father for abandoning the family when it needed him the most. Yet, he had the courage to confront his father after years of a lack of communication. Now they see each other and communicate more frequently.

The mental health counselor, who was a part of the evaluation team made comments and observations about the overall research project. She reported that for her, the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness was designed to be a bridge for both the pastor and the youth. For the pastor, it established a means for communication, pastoral ministry, pastoral care and counseling, and to teach biblical principles. For the youth, it established a means for open dialogue and expression, therapeutic intervention and support, the potential for growth and development, and a safe haven for change to occur. Moreover, she went on to acknowledge that this bridge was designed for the purpose of uniting pastor and youth where the voice of reason would serve to create an atmosphere, and also where the pastor and the youth could come together for the purpose of sharing life

experiences that caused hurt and pain. Creating this atmosphere allowed the youth an opportunity to see the pastor as an individual, human, and like them, with problems too. The pastor was able to see the youth, as they were, troubled, perplexed and uncertain of which road to take in life. She concluded her analysis by highlighting that the bridge served as a gateway to allow those individuals involved to have the freedom to crossover, just as they were, without judgment and pressure from the evaluation team, but with the freedom to lay it all on the altar. Here the youth became exposed and felt that it was okay to hurt, to cry, to be angry and upset. But, in the end, by being exposed, this allowed them an opportunity to heal, to build relationships and find meaning and purpose in their lives. By being exposed, this allowed them to come to terms with past unresolved issues that plagued their lives and caused them to be unproductive. And by being exposed, this bridge caused them to journey into a new way of acting, thinking and feeling where they were no longer bound or a prisoner of their own self-esteem, sexual orientation, anger and aggression and brokenness. The bridge had served as a therapeutic and interventional guide that exposed the youth to the realization that God had a greater purpose for their lives.

At the end of their journey, many of the youth witnessed and testified to how much they had gained from being a part of the research project. For the researcher, the testimonials of each one of those youth and the mental health counselor's observations were inspirational because the research project had made a difference in their lives. Just to hear an unsuspecting and unassuming question from one of the context associates, the honest and sincere responses of each youth, and the mental health counselor's viewpoint

were priceless and unforgettable for the researcher, and brought the entire research project together.

In the final analysis, the researcher speculates that the youth in many of the churches today daily carry a baggage of psychological, emotional and spiritual refuse with them caused by loss and separation, physical and sexual abuse, alienation and abandonment, neglect and domestic violence, and the list goes on. Those causes lead to the hurt and pain of real people, and find expression or effect in the lives of young males through depression, anger and aggression, withdrawal, low self-esteem and mistrust of others to enumerate a few. However, God did not create humanity to live in torment of itself nor of others. Again, God through Jesus Christ wants humanity to live an abundant life, "…I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10(b), NKJV). What the research project does is to assist pastors and others to create a forum so that young African American males can dialogue about their hurt and pain, both past and present, with them. And when a youth attempts to evade those discussions, a pastor has a variety of resource tools to use at her/his disposal. The continual increase in the prison population, murders of young African American males against each other, juvenile delinquency, and domestic violence serve as markers that there are problems and there is also a real need for a research project of this nature to be adopted and implemented in the local churches.

Those youth, who participated in the research project, have been liberated from past and present hurt and pain, and are on their way to healthy growth and positive development, as they relate to psychological, emotional and spiritual maturation. Just like

those youth, the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness is available to those pastors and/or persons who love and care about the plight of young African American males.

As an addendum to the research project, the researcher wants to share his pre and post academic development through his participation in the doctoral program that should be inspirational to those who have entered and are challenged by the Doctor of Ministry degree program. When I entered the Doctor of Ministry degree program at United Theological Seminary, I had four expectations that I wanted to be equipped with so that I would be in a position to fulfill: (a) pastoral privileges; (b) principal officer (a seminary Dean); (c) political platform; and (d) personal ambition. Let me briefly explain each segment.

The Doctor of Ministry degree will foster pastoral privileges for me that I would not ordinarily receive without it. Currently, I serve as the Pastor of a suburban church, Grady-Madison African Methodist Episcopal Church located in Madison, Alabama. With this doctoral degree in the public square as a pastor, I expect to experience many doors of opportunity to open for me to those whom I serve and minister; establish communal and ecumenical friendships and relationships; and generate respect and advancements for Kingdom building. I will fulfill my duty and be in compliance with the Word of God which teaches us, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15, KJV).

As a principal officer, a Doctor of Ministry degree will allow me, as the Dean of the Nichols-Grady-Thomas School of Religion located in Birmingham, Alabama, to be effective in my role as a leader of a School and to be able to advise instructors and

students. Moreover, from this position, I expect to gain access to other academic institutions, recruit faculty, staff and students, create revenue streams and retrieve financial resources from philanthropists and donors.

A Doctor of Ministry degree should permit me time to conduct research and writing, formulate ideas and concepts, and dialogue with mentors and classmates in preparation for a political platform in the public square. Being in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and having served both as a Pastor and Dean, I should be in an advantageous posture to speak at seminars, workshops, symposiums and lectures to discuss issues concerning my interests on African American males, in general and youth, in particular.

Then I have a personal ambition to earn a Doctor of Ministry degree. As far back as I can remember, my parents have encouraged me to obtain a doctoral degree, regardless of the field of endeavor. Their reasoning and theory for this pursuit of academic excellence have been that once I have the degree in hand, no one can take it from me nor can anybody deny me opportunity for advancement.

Lastly, despite the amount of time that is left in my life, I can testify that God is not through with me yet nor does it appear what I shall become. As I am still in the process of "becoming", the Doctor of Ministry degree in my context has value for me to receive pastoral privileges, to assist as a principal officer, to establish a political platform, and to fulfill a personal ambition.

Upon reflection and in completion of the degree program, I have grown tremendously, both spiritually and intellectually. All four of my expectations have been met or are still in the making as a result of obtaining a Doctor of Ministry degree. During the two and a half years that I have studied and worked to achieve this doctoral degree, however,

my life has not been a bed of roses, a crystal stairway or a pleasure cruise. An unwanted expectation arose, yet it crystallized and consummated the degree program for me. From my varied experiences, I developed an expectation that I call "potent testimonies" which firmly and faithfully declare that "surely our God is able to bring me (us) through" precarious predicaments. Even though there were many mountain-top experiences (the good did outweigh the bad), strong-holds torn down and deferred dreams that became present realities, my life encountered some situations along the way that fueled my determination and desire to complete the degree program rather than to raise a white flag of surrender.

For instance, at the commencement of the degree program, I still had fresh memories over the death of my youngest sister, the murder of my youngest brother in October/2006, the loss of my father in January/2009, and involved in two major car accidents (but was able to walk away). In each heart-wrenching circumstance, I found it very difficult to stay focus on the degree program. Nevertheless, I learned to lean and depend upon the Word of God, called on the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and trusted in the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. As a result, I was lifted from a valley of despair and disappointment to a mountain-top of peace and joy, and also transformed to bear a radiant spirit of determination and desire.

In conclusion of the whole matter, I want to encourage and empower you, my sister or brother, that in the degree program, you may encounter some difficulties and frustrations that might even draw you to a point where you want to toss your hands in the air and quit. Do not do this! You just keep on moving forward and grinding away with the task at hand. The benefits and blessings from having a doctoral degree are far greater

than you can imagine. No matter what you go through or how challenging the degree program may be, you just trust and obey God, and do not doubt, "for surely our God is able to bring you (us) through." This is no hype or small talk. I have gained unexpected "potent testimonies" to tell you and others that surely God will bring you through. Always remember, what God has done for others, God surely will do the same for you.

Limitations

Despite the overall effectiveness and success of the research project, there were challenges that confronted the evaluation team which ought to be noted: (a) the youth trusted and confided in the evaluation team and gave some very personal and damming information about their family system; nevertheless, this information was needed for healing and wholeness, and must be held in utmost confidence; (b) some of the problems that the youth faced could be best solved with other family members present to receive therapy as well (this will have to be the pastor's call based on her/his training and expertise in group counseling); (c) one of the youth, Youth C was a victim of Hurricane Katrina—the family lost everything, (such as family members dividing-up, valuables and personals destroyed, dignity and pride torn asunder, and so forth)--- and even relocating in a new area and living there for two years, the family went homeless again for three months. The trauma that this youth has experienced requires professional help and a recommendation was made to him to seek professional psychological counseling and evaluation; (d) scheduling problems existed between the evaluation team and youth in that the youth had demanding schedules where they participated in numerous extra-

curricular activities and meetings, and caused the research project to extend for a longer period; (e) only a small sample of youth were selected who were from suburban neighborhoods; (f) time and distance were demanding in that the evaluation team had to drive over an hour and a half to either of the locations and then to return back home; (g) the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness "just so happened" to be used in the context of young African American males and this may be viewed as a gender and race biased research project; quite the contrary, the spiritual guide for healing and wholeness transcends race, gender, age, religion, social status, culture or any other man-made barriers and was designed to reach out to youth to create clear and effective guidelines for the purpose of establishing a gateway where those involved would experience healing and wholeness as a result of sharing their hurt and pain; (h) when a pastor gets involved in this spiritual guide for healing and wholeness, one must be prepared for a wide range of problems that confronts a youth. For instance, Youth A revealed to the research team after the third session, that he was once a devil worshipper. He reported that he was ten when he decided to take part in a demonic ritual ceremony. Youth A called himself a "cutter" or someone who gave blood for the ceremony. He expressed cutting was a cry for help and that the blood represented relief. He reported feeling nothing when he was cutting himself, but the relief came after he visibly saw the blood streaming down his arms. Youth A was hospitalized for these aberrant behaviors and is currently receiving outside help from a counselor. The research project assisted Youth A with issues that were related to self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation. Based on his comments, Youth A found those sessions to be more helpful than his school's counselor. Furthermore, because this youth required more counseling, our

sessions were limited primarily due to the nature of this research project; and (i) the researcher also noted that at the completion of the research project that there were crisis that arose and were beyond the scope of the researcher's expertise, and a request was made by the evaluation team and professional associates for Youth A to pursue professional help as well as the pastor renders frequent prayers for his healing.

It must be emphasized that this research project was profoundly informed by a counseling session that Jesus initiated with Simon Peter. Jesus spoke in a spirit of healing and wholeness, and urged Simon Peter to keep the practice alive as he declares,

> And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." (Luke 22:31-32, NKJV)

The fellowship within the body of Christ is required to follow the example of empathy and support that Jesus shared with his first disciple in order that each soul will save other lost souls, so that the whole world through him might be saved. It is also the hope and prayer of this researcher that pastors will use this spiritual guide for healing and wholeness to carry out Jesus' request to Simon Peter to be healed first, and then be made whole to help others.

APPENDIX A

PRE-QUESTIONAIRRE

Pre-Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed for the purpose of learning more about your self-esteem level and is designed in no way to expose the participants

1. On a scale of one to ten, how would you rate yourself? (one represents the lowest level and ten represent the greatest level). _____
2. How well do you fit in with your peers? ____ I fit in ___ I struggle to fit in ____ I do not fit in at all
3. Do you have to please your friends in order to be accepted by them? ____Yes _____ No
4. How would you rate your intelligence? ___Very smart ___ Average ___ Under average
5. Do your parents constantly remind you to do your home work or do you take the initiative to do it without being told? ___ Have to be told __Take the initiative without being told
6. How would you rate your overall appearance on a scale of one to ten (one represents the lowest level and ten represents the greatest level.) _____
7. Are you easily pressured by your friends to do things that you do not believe in just to fit in and be accepted by them? _____ Yes ____ No
8. How would you rate your popularity in school? ____Very popular ____ Average _____not popular at all
9. Do you participate in extracurricular activities in school? ___ Yes ____ No
10. Are you sociable in school? ____Yes _____No
11. Do you hang-out with friends outside of a school setting? ____Yes _____No
12. Are your parents supportive of the friend(s) you hang-out with? ___Yes ___ No
13. Do your mother and father live in the same household? ___Yes ___ No
14. If no, who takes care of you? _____
15. Do you have siblings? _____ Yes ____ No

16. If yes, what birth order are you? _____

Career and Education

17. What are your career plans after you complete high school or college? (Please circle all that apply.)

    a. Attend a junior college
    b. Attend a four year college
    c. Join the military
    d. Get a job
    e. Undecided
    f. Get married and have a family
    g. Other (name what the other is) _____

18. Do you feel that you are more **academic/college oriented** or more **job skill-oriented?** (Circle One)

19. If you have chosen a career path, what is it? (circle one)

    a. Education/Teacher
    b. Medical Field
    c. Policeman/Fireman
    d. Military Officer
    e. Manager
    f. Real Estate
    g. Pharmacist
    h. Custodian/Environmental Services
    i. Other (list other) _____

20. Having selected a career choice, do you feel pressured by someone to go in a particular direction or is this solely your choice? (Circle one)
    A. Your choice
    B. Pressure from someone else to go in a particular direction

21. Do you have an alternate career plan if the one you have chosen does not work-out? (Circle One)

    A. I have an alternate plan (What are your plans?)_____

    _____

    B. I do not have an alternate plan

Religion-Spirituality

22. How often do you spend time studying the Bible? (Circle One)

A. Daily
B. Weekly
C. Only when at church
D. Never

23. How often do you pray? (Circle One)

E. Once a day
F. More than once a day
G. Whenever I am in a crisis
H. Hardly ever
I. Never

24. When you pray, do you believe that God hears your prayer? (Circle One)

J. All of the time
K .Most of the time
L. Only when my prayers are sincere
M God never hears my prayer

25. When you pray, do you believe that God will answer your prayer? (Circle One)

N. Never
O Every time
P Most of the time
Q Hardly ever
R. In God's own time

26. Do you feel that when you do bad things that God is punishing you? (Circle One)

S. All the time
T. Sometimes
U. Hardly ever
V. Never
W. The bad things happened as a result of my own actions

27. What is your definition of faith? (Circle One)

X. Evidence of things unseen
Y. The result of what I can see in the here and now
Z. Other (Explain)_____

APPENDIX B

SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY QUESTIONS

Spiritual Autobiography Questions

1. When did you first hear about God? (Please explain your answer)

2. When you went through difficult moments, were you able to give God credit for bringing you through them? (Please describe this experience)

3. Who are you? (Describe yourself in detail)

APPENDIX C

HEALTH QUESTIONAIRE

Health Questionnaire

1. Do you have any known medical conditions? (Please list)_____

2. Do you participate in a fitness program? _____

3. If you answered yes to question two, how often do you work-out?

   Once a week ___ Twice a Week___ Everyday___ Once a month___

4. When was the last time you had a physical given by a physician?

   Within the last month ____Within the last three months____

   Within the last six months ___Within the last year___ Over a year ago___

5. How would you rate your health? Poor___ Average___ Good___ Excellent___

6. Do you or have you ever consume alcohol? Yes___ No___ If yes, how often do you drink and on what occasions _____

7. Have you ever tried illicit drugs? Yes____ No ____ If yes, what kind?

   _____

8. Are you sexually active? Yes___ No___

9. Have you ever had sex? Yes___ No ___

10. If you answered yes, do you use protection? Yes ___ No ___

11. How much sleep do you get on the average, within a day? 1-3 hours _____ 4-6 hours _____ 7-9 hours _____ more than 10 hours _____

12. What meals do you routinely eat within a day? Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner____ Breakfast and Lunch_____ Breakfast and Dinner____ Lunch and Dinner_____ Breakfast only ___ Lunch only___ Dinner only___ Junk foods or no consistent diet ____

13. Are you taking any medications? Yes___ No ___

14. What are the names of the medications? _____

15. Why are you taking them? _____

APPENDIX D

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

Confidentiality Statement And Consent Form

A. In describing the group, the researcher will identify age, education and demographic characteristics without naming each participant. Clients will be asked if they wish to review any quotes from the interviews or sessions. If such quotes are used, the identity of the participants will be completely disguised.

B. The information that will be provided to the participants about the research project is through a one-on-one interview where the interviewer will outline the purpose and procedure for the research project and emphasize that their absolute confidentiality will be preserved.

C. The circumstances under which informed consent will be obtained from participants are that at the initial one-on-one interviews, the researcher will present the Confidentiality Statement and Consent Form, read over the contents of said form to address any concerns that the participants might have, again reassure the participants that the utmost confidentiality will be maintained, and then inform the participants that they can withdraw from the interviews or research project at any time, without harming the feelings of the researcher.

D. The expected benefits for the participants include: (a) to give the participants an opportunity to reflect on their spiritual journey; (b) to give the participants a sense of satisfaction in contributing to a research project that may benefit other young males like themselves; (c) to gain a better understanding of self, family, church, community and God in relationship to them; and (d) to have an opportunity to generate a model of ministry for healing and wholeness that will serve as a liberating tool of empowerment and encouragement for others dealing with issues of hurt and pain through pastoral care and counseling and a multi-systematic approach.

E. The researcher is not aware of any foreseeable risks or discomforts arising from the participant's participation in the research project. However, the participant's reflections on a particular issue in his life may elicit unpleasant thoughts and feelings. Nevertheless, the researcher will remind the participant that he can withdraw from that particular question or even the interview or session, for that matter, at any time. The researcher will be sensitive to this concern and response.

F. The steps that will be taken to maintain the confidentiality of records and the identity of the participants in publications or reports regarding the research are: (a) for each interview, rather than use the real name of the participant, a letter in the alphabet will serve as a substitute; (b) after the research project has concluded, the researcher will place all notes and any other information gathered in a locked file cabinet for three years, then all of these documents will be destroyed; and (c) no description of comments or quotations from the interviews or sessions will be

used in the research paper unless the participant authorizes the researcher to do so by signing a waiver in the Confidentiality Statement and Consent Form.

Participant's Consent

I have read the above information and understand its confidentiality and content.

Your signature _____

Your name (Please Print):_____

Do you waive your rights for the researcher to release or use information regarding the information you disclosed in the interviews and/or sessions, without giving your identity? Yes ____ No____ (Check one)

Today's Date_____

APPENDIX E

SYNOPSIS OF MOVIE: "ANTWONE FISHER"

Synopsis of Movie: "Antwone Fisher"

This move is based on a true story about a young troubled sailor (Antwone Fisher), who finds himself getting into trouble because of his anger and aggression. He is ordered by his superiors to see (Derek Luke), a Navy psychiatrist (Denzel Washington), who helps him deal with his anger and aggression by using self-disclosure and resolving unfinished business from his past. Prior to Antwone Fisher joining the Navy, he had been homeless and surrounded by a life of crime and violence. (Directed by Denzel Washington in 2002)

APPENDIX F

CONTEXT ASSOCIATES MOVIE SELECTIONS

Context Associates Movie Selections

The purpose of the research project is to assist in the psychological, emotional and spiritual development of young African American males, who have been exposed to experiences of loss, separation, abandonment, hurt and pain.

From the research project, through a pre-questionnaire, spiritual autobiography, and face-to-face interview, these youths' experiences have found expressions in the forms of low self-esteem, poor anger management, fantasy or escape from reality, sexual orientation issues, trust versus mistrust issues, decision-making issues, coping skill issues, social relationship issues and parenting concerns.

One way the research project attempts to address some of these experiences and ways to overcome them is through the visual medium of movies. Below you will find the narratives of ten movies that represent the research project's concerns. Since we cannot show all ten movies, the research project requires you to select three movies that best accomplish the project's objective which is to help these youth in their psychological, emotional and spiritual development.

You may have heard, seen or want to see any one of the movies listed. Again, you must select only three movies that "best-fit" for the success of this research project.

(Place an X on the line to indicate your movie selection)

America: Psychiatrist Maureen Brennan (Rosie O'Donnell) encounters a heart-wrenching case in her patient America (Philip Johnson), a teenager, who is filled with rage after years of parental neglect, sexual abuse and foster care red tape. As Dr. Brennan and America sift through the turmoil of his past and move towards healing, memories of Mrs. Harper (Ruby Dee), a kind and strong woman from his childhood, helps America on his journey. _____

Decisions: Starring Master P and Lil' Romeo. "Decisions" was also written and directed by Master P. The film is a whodunit tale done "hood style" and steeped in the age-old theme of good versus evil, along with some life-changing decisions that could either be the difference between prison or freedom. _____

Lock Down: Three friends, Avery (Richard T. Jones), Cashmere (Gabriel Casseus) and Dre (De'Aundre Bonds), are wrongly imprisoned for a crime they did not commit. Cashmere quickly adapts to jail-life, Dre suffers sexual abuse doled out by his cellmates, and Avery tries to make a difference even being incarcerated. Out of the three, it is Avery who stands to lose the most: his girlfriend Krista, his son Jordan and a future in college as a competitive swimmer. Can he escape the tyranny of prison life? _____

Miracle's Boys: Five renowned directors (Spike Lee, Ernest Dickerson, Neema Barnette, Bill Duke and LeVar Burton) take their place at the helm of this Nickelodeon-produced miniseries based on Jacqueline Woodson's award-winning novel. Set in Harlem, the series chronicles the lives of three recently orphaned half Puerto Rican and half African-American brothers, who try to hold their families together._____

Young Cesar: When he went to prison, Ali Dean (Clifton Powell) left behind two sons. Tariq (Sam Sarpong) trains to become a boxer, but his brother, Cesar (Dominic Daniel), ends-up on the streets dealing drugs. And while Ali is about to be released, he may not be able to save his wayward son. The deeper Cesar gets into crime, the more important Ali's need to be a father to him becomes a reality. _____

Our America: This riveting drama is based on a true story of two African-American teenagers from the Southside of Chicago, and a National Public Radio producer takes a chance and hires them to report on the murder of a 5 year-old child. "Our America" paints a sobering portrait of chronic social ills that often don't make the news headlines.
_____

The- Gospel: Returning to his father's church after turning his back on God, a young singer (Boris Kodjoe) makes an unpleasant discovery that his childhood nemesis (Idris Elba) has a "new vision" for the congregation as he takes over the leadership.. Writer-director Rob Hardy helms this inspiring drama based on the biblical lesson "The Parable of the Prodigal Son" featuring the music of Yolanda Adams, Martha Munizzi, Delores "Mom" Winans and "American Idol" finalist Tamyra Gray. _____

Grace and Mercy: Based on a true story, two sisters are broke, busted and disgusted, so Grace (Kyra Groves) puts together a reckless plan to rob her ex-employer. The armed robbery goes awry, so the sisters seek refuge in a church, where they take the pastor and several members hostage. While the police negotiate with the two fugitives, the pastor offers them spiritual guidance … but is it too late for redemption?

Prison Song: The American dream is at odds with the criminal justice system in this story about the deterioration of the soul of one inner-city African American male. Being raised primarily in group homes, Elijah (Rapper Q-Tip) lifts himself up through art and education, but when a college full-time scholarship is revoked, frustration and anger cause him to murder accidentally another teenager. Convicted and jailed, Elijah once again attempts to free his broken spirit through art. _____

Prince of Tides: A Southern school teacher (Nick Nolte) travels to New York City and unloads a lifetime of horrific experiences and repressed memories to a psychiatrist (Barbara Streisand) in order to help save his suicidal sister. This movie is based on a best-selling novel by Pat Conroy. _____

APPENDIX G

QUESTIONS ON MOVIE: "ANTWONE FISHER"

Questions on the Movie: "Antwone Fisher"

1. After watching the movie Antwone Fisher, can you relate to his situation?

2. Place yourself in Antwone Fisher's situation, would you react the same way?

3. Do you feel that Antwone Fisher's anger was there for a reason? (Based on what?)

4. If this were a real life situation, what would you change about Antwone Fisher?

5. Have you ever been placed in a situation that caused you to be angry just like Antwone Fisher? (Elaborate on that situation)

6. Is anger management and aggression a problem that you feel you cannot control? (Explain your answer)

7. Do you feel that Antwone Fisher's situation was one that he could have controlled? (Explain your response)

8. Do you feel that this movie helped you in any way?

9. If you answered yes to question 8, what way did this movie help you?

10. On a scale of one to ten, what is your anger level? (One is the lowest level and ten is the highest level)

APPENDIX H

YOUTH PROFILES

Youth Profiles

The data for the youth involved in the research project comes from a pre- and post-questionnaire, spiritual autobiography, one-on-one interviews, group therapy, Bible studies, telephone calls, rap sessions, investigator triangulation and previous information in a pastoral role to enumerate a few elements.

YOUTH A

Youth A is a seventeen year old African American male who attended Highland and West Madison Lake Elementary Schools in Madison, Alabama, Meridianville Middle School in Meridian, Alabama, and presently in the tenth (10^{th}) and eleventh (11^{th}) grades at a private school, Columbia High School, in Madison, Alabama. Youth A's mother and father sporadically lived together and raised Youth A. For most of his life, Youth A had been raised by his grandmother, off and on, even when he was less than one year old. She is currently raising him now. For majority of his life, Youth A's mother (late thirties) has suffered from emotional problems and drug addition, and presently works as a stripper in a night club to make ends meet. Likewise, for the majority of his life, Youth A's father has been absent from his life. When they had interacted, Youth A's father had physically abused him because Youth A displayed signs of being "gay or sissy", and the father was determined that he would not have a gay/sissy son. Youth A states that an elementary school teacher discovered bruises about Youth A's body in the first grade and reported it. Publically, Youth A states that was the first sign that he had been a victim of child abuse. Consequently, Children Services removed Youth A from the house and after a two week custody battle, Youth A's grandparents gained custody of him. Moreover, Youth A's father not only physically abused him, but the father physically abused his wife as well.

Youth A has primarily been raised by his grandmother since he was a toddler. Youth A has an eighteen year old African American female cousin, who has resided in the same household for the past four years. Youth A describes his relationship with his cousin as strained because his grandmother gives her more freedom to do whatever she wants. And he says she is "too hot to trot". While at the same time, Youth A is restricted from the same freedoms as his cousin and this makes him angry. Youth A also says that this arrangement means that his grandmother does not trust him and this is one of the primary reasons that he rebels against her. Youth A states that his cousin and he sleeps in the same bed and shares the same room because they live in a small two bedroom apartment. Youth A has also stated that he resents his grandmother because his cousin is very sneaky and lies to his grandmother, yet she rewards her behavior and punishes him even though he does not do the things that his cousin does.

When Youth A came into custody of his grandmother and grandfather, less than a year later, they divorced. Youth A remained with his grandmother and makes contact with his grandfather by telephone and is picked-up from school by him. Youth A also has a

strained relationship with his grandmother. Youth A states that his grandmother attacks his character, primarily by giving him an instruction to do something and then comes back, only a few moments later, to nag him about the instructions that were given earlier, and had not been followed through by him. Youth A feels he has his own concept of time, which is to do things when he gets to them as opposed to when he is told to do so. Youth A feels relieved when his grandmother is not at home, and he feels other relatives have a similar sentiment. For instance, Youth A states that once his grandmother left home to go to work (she has her own beauty salon) and his cousins came over to have a bar-be-que to celebrate his grandmother not being home to mettle with anyone.

Youth A rebels against his grandmother, both openly and privately. Openly, Youth A yells and argues with his grandmother when he feels the need to defend himself, which is quite often. Privately, Youth A rebels against his grandmother by doing the opposite of what she tells him to do. For instance, Youth A states that his grandmother told him to be home in twenty minutes, but he purposely returned home in twenty minutes and stood outside of the apartment for an hour before going in.

Youth A says his grandmother could also be "nagging" at him because she not only raised her four children, but now, late in life, she has to make further unexpected sacrifices to raise him and his cousin. Youth A states that his grandmother went through a divorce, and during his childhood and adolescent years he was made to feel guilty for being at the home through her anger and unhappiness. Youth A states that his grandmother might not have had an opportunity to find consolation from her divorce, and now he lives her bitterness, or the life that she never had. Youth A admits that the apartment where they reside is overcrowded and cluttered by the number of people in it (3 adults in a 2 bedroom) and the abundance of material possessions.

Youth A states that his grandmother "nags" so much at him that he avoids her by biting his lips, going to his bedroom to read, sleep, eat, watch television and listen to music. Youth A also states that he can clean the entire apartment, but his grandmother will overlook that and say, "You missed a spot here." Youth A states when his grandmother tells the "business" about the household, in particular as it relates to him, she only tells half the truth. Youth A confirms this fact because he overhears her talking on the telephone. Youth A states that his grandmother makes him feel like a burden and someone who messes-up "all the time" and that he cannot do anything right. Youth A believes the ideal way his grandmother expects him to behave is to go to school, do his work, go to church on Sunday, come home and be quiet. Youth A further describes his relationship with his grandmother as follows: she stresses him out, he is a whopping board for her problems, and he believes that she wants him to admit that he needs her but he refuses to do so, due to other options available for him "to go live with other relatives".

Youth A states that his relationship with his mother is not close. He talks with her daily about general matters, but not personal matters. He states that he just tolerates her. Youth A, however, states that his mother is the most beautiful woman in the world. Youth A also states that he dated a woman a year ago who looked like his mother and he

attempted to have sex with her. Youth A goes on to say that turned out to be a terrible experience and that he would not date another woman. Youth A states that the relationship he has with his grandmother on his father's side is that they talk about everything, including personal matters. He describes this particular grandmother as caring. Youth A describes his relationship with his father as very communicative, but other than that he has no other contact with him.

Youth A claims that he does his best in school, but his grades are usually C's, D's, and F's. Youth A feels a need to defend himself also in school. Youth A states that recently a female classmate belittled him in front of the entire class about his sexuality. Youth A felt threatened because the teacher did not respond to the situation and did not handle it professionally by not "doing her job". Youth A responded by yelling, shouting and throwing chairs about the classroom. Youth A was subsequently handcuffed by the police, arrested for disorderly conduct and taken to a Juvenile Detention Facility. Youth A argues that if he had an opportunity to do it again, he still would respond in the same manner. Because he feels no one should get away with what his classmate did to him.

Youth A states that he is different from others in that he is "gay" and likes to wear nail polish, eye liner, and changes his hairstyles and colors frequently. Youth A says he wants to be a cosmetologist or make-up artist, but he does not have a supportive environment for his interest. Youth A states that majority of people laugh, tease and criticize him for his interest. Youth A says that he feels wherever he goes that people are talking about his "differences". Youth A feels that he must defend his image against those who are "smashing his character". Moreover, Youth A states that because he feels different "he does not fit in". Youth A does not feel that he is a good person because of the choices he has made in life. That is why he feels the world seems to be against him.

Youth A states that he has a lack of understanding of God. Moreover, Youth A claims his understanding of Christianity centers mostly on heaven and hell. Because his family members in particular, his mother and father, have told him so many times that he is going to hell because he is gay. Youth A states that Christianity is about being good and being bad. Youth A also states that he has been exposed to satanic worship and witchcraft between the ages of twelve and fifteen. During this period, Youth A states that he considered himself to be a "cutter", which is the one who draws blood for demonic worship service. Youth A states that he left this cult because he knows that Satan does not rule over him and he states that he started hearing voices tell him to kill himself. Youth A also described "cutting" as an outward cry for help when he was being picked-on by other kids. Youth A remembered a situation that occurred because kids were picking on him at the playground and before he knew it he had cut himself so severely that he was taken to the hospital. Youth A states that he does not hear demonic voices at this present time. Youth A also states that during the period of demonic worship that he began listening to rap and heavy metal music. He also participated in incantations and meditations that caused him to enter into a trance where he conversed with demons and demonic spirits that told him to do bad things. He claims to never listen to the spirits, but found an escape after he got so angry one night and wondered off by himself. He

describes this experience as cold, wet, lonely and misguided with no one to turn to, so he went back home to the warmth of his apartment where his grandmother lived.

Youth A states that his character can be described as four people in one body: Person one is very nice, caring, sweet and wishes the best for everyone; Person two is trying to make good grades, be nice, have good morals and encourage others to be happy even when he is not happy himself; Person three is sneaky, he "is in it to win it" rather than to be hurt at the end, he will do whatever it takes to be on top even if it is violence, and he says what- ever is on his mind, regardless of the consequences; and Person four is ten times worse, he curses, fights, rude, extremely violent and hates everyone. He hates himself at times. He also over eats and drinks way too much alcohol and is extremely violent. Youth A states that he does not like persons three and four, but they are there. Youth A states that he gives God credit for allowing him to live seventeen years.

Youth B

Youth B is an eighteen year old African American male, who attends Calhoun Community College in Madison, Alabama. He is a first year student whose major is Civil Engineering. He was born in Neptune, New Jersey. His parents separated from each other when he was in the second grade. He is the only male child, but has two older sisters. He says his sisters used to beat him up. For instance, the older sister was nineteen years old and the younger sister eleven years old, when he was in the second grade, and the oldest sister locked him in a closet for three hours. Youth B says this happened after he broke his younger sister's doll, cut the doll's hair and broke the doll's mouth.

Youth B recalls early memories of his dad when he was around. He recalled his father taking him to the movies and fishing. Those events took place when he was around four of five years of age. He also recalls memories of his babysitter and how she constantly beat him for something he had not done. He states that his head hurt for three days after the beating took place. Youth B also remembers that he received whippings all the time, at least three times a week. His feelings about those beatings seem to have not affected him. He reports that it did not bother him that he got those beatings from his parents, but they did fire the babysitter for what she had done.

Youth B moved from the Wasmassuan neighborhood while in the third grade, which was majority white and not racist to Neptune, New Jersey.. He says during this period, his parents filed for bankruptcy. Also, by this time, Youth B's oldest sister had moved out of the house only to move next door to them. He recalls he got interested in sports, wrestling, while in the third grade, and football, while in the fourth grade. Youth B claims that initially he had no interest in winning or losing at sports until he reached middle school. Despite wrestling for several years, he quit the wrestling team after being accused of stealing another team mate's necklace. He subsequently joined the recreation team rather than the school team because the coach of the school's team was not very supportive in the accusations brought against him. During this time Youth B reports that

he developed a hunger and thirst to win. He also states that during this period his mother and father did not show that they were having marital problems.

Youth B's mother and father's discipline consisted of whipping his hand with about three licks, until he reached his teenaged years. He says that his family lived in a large house, where at first he slept in the same room with his younger sister, but by the second grade, they had separate rooms. Youth B reports that even though he lived in a suburban area of Neptune, New Jersey, that this area resembled the "hood" because it consisted of majority African Americans.

Youth B's relationship with his father was not a great one. He reports that his father suffered from depression and drank a lot. He also reports that his father had a good job as a trucker and brought home a lot of money. But his father lost that job, and began to drink. His oldest sister fought and argued with the father. His father began avoided coming home some nights, and came home late at other times.

Youth B blames his father for the marital break-up because he believes his father's drinking drove his mother away. In addition, he reports that his sister had emotional problems which resulted in her being placed in a foster home. He describes a situation that occurred with his sister having a temper tantrum and ended up locked-up as an adult in prison. Youth B left Neptune, New Jersey and came to Huntsville, Alabama when he was around seven years old. Youth B's mother worked for the federal government as a contractor in the Department of Defense.

Youth B describes the neighborhood of Neptune as being different from the Madison, Alabama suburban neighborhood in that the Madison neighborhood is majority white, more focused on status and more economically settled. The Neptune, New Jersey neighborhood had lots of murders and crime.

Youth B states that he did not try to accelerate in academics and did not study or do his homework, and only did enough to get by in school. Youth B also states that when he moved to Madison, Alabama, his high school demanded good grades and the environment helped him to excel and work harder to achieve. However, he was already behind. He recalls how he suffered at his other school because of the attitude of the teachers and their unwillingness to help him after school with assignments in mathematics.

Youth B developed an interest in engineering and decided that he wanted to make a career of it. He recalls being angry in high school and talking back to his teachers. He got involved in a serious fight against his cousin in the tenth grade. Youth B claims that even now that he lets people know about themselves, with no regard to how it makes them feel. Youth B came to Madison, Alabama when he was in the tenth grade and whenever someone crosses his path and causes him problems he addresses it right then, regardless of the consequences.

Youth C

Youth C is an African American male, eighteen years old, who also attends Calhoun Community College in Madison Alabama, majoring in childhood education. Youth C states that he does not like Alabama, in general, and Madison, in particular because he "does not fit in" nor does he connect with people there. Youth C says that he "does not fit in" because he is from Slidell, Louisiana which is in the suburbs of New Orleans. Youth C claims that the people in Madison dress, talk and act differently from those who live in his home area. He says "they are just slow here and have a different lifestyle than he is accustomed to." Youth C is a victim of Hurricane Katrina that struck the areas of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama in August, 2005.

Youth C states that around the time he was dislocated from his home, which was destroyed along with all his familiar belongings and family values, his family relocated with some friends of the family in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Youth C claims that his family stayed there for a month and a half where there were no lights, electricity or running water. Youth C states that he remembers it being dark and that this area had been hit by Hurricane Katrina as well. He states that he enjoyed the time missed away from school and made the most of it. Youth C also states that other family members subsequently opened their doors so they could relocate from Mississippi to Madison, Alabama. Youth C claims that when he and his family arrived in Madison, it seemed like everybody was supportive and humanitarian; however, after the novelty of Hurricane Katrina wore off, then people returned to business as usual.

Youth C states that he tried to pretend everything was alright and that the problems of loss and separation did not exist, but in reality this experience was a nightmare. Youth C states that after a couple of weeks in Madison, Alabama, reality set-in, where he realized that he no longer had his house to live in, significant belongings were never going to come back and he might not ever see his social group of friends again whom he never had a chance to say "goodbye." Youth C claims that his brother next in age to him made this whole ordeal bearable through his love, support and care.

Youth C states that when he talks to others about the Hurricane Katrina experience, he only tells part of the story because they do not really comprehend the magnitude and impact that that experience had on people. Youth C states that when he talks to people who went through that experience they can relate and he is able to "let go" because it becomes a shared reality. Youth C claims that he gets angry with people in the Madison area, in particular his school peers, because they take so much for granted and do not recognize that they could loose it all in an instance. Youth C states that he also gets angry because people are not sensitive and do not realize what he has gone through and the devastation and loss that he had encountered—school, church, home, friends, family, losing their spirit and material possessions. He summed it up this way, "I lost my whole life when Hurricane Katrina left."

Youth C states that he plays sports so that he can dissolve anger and humiliation, and does not do anything "stupid" that would get him in trouble. Youth C claims that last year he went back to his home area and part of the area is now rebuilt. Youth C states that he felt relieved to go back home, but that only lasted a few moments because he cannot return back there again to begin the lifestyle that he once knew.

Youth C states that life prior to Hurricane Katrina was not really great. Youth C claims that his family seemed to move from house to house every six months because his mother could not afford to pay rent. Youth C states even though his family moved frequently; he remained at the same school and those moves did not affect him academically.

Youth C states that he is the first born child and has one brother, who was born a year later. Youth C claims that he got numerous whippings from his mother because he could not seem to do the right thing. Youth C states that his mother attended Alabama A & M in Huntsville, Alabama, and got a Master's degree in Forestry and Preservation from the same school. Youth C states that she relocated to Slidell, Louisiana and had a government job in the same area as her degree, and in less than a year, she got married. Youth C states that his mother gave birth to he and his brother, and that his father was a truck driver. Youth C states that after two years of marriage, his mother and father divorced, and later he found out that his father got another woman pregnant.

Youth C states that his stepbrother lives in Athens, Alabama and is less than ten minutes from his father. Youth C states that he communicates with his father frequently, but he rarely asks about his brother. Youth C claims that he has only seen his father once this year and they argue every time they communicate on the telephone with each other. Youth C also states that his father does not keep his word because last year when he did see his father, his father brought a car that turned-out to be a lemon. He states that the car broke down a hour after his father left town to return home.

Youth C states that his relationship with his father is a surface one in that he only talks to him and views him only as a man, who participated in his birth process. Youth C also claims in spite of a strained relationship with his father, he still would like to have a relationship with him because a father and son should be able to get along with each other, despite their differences.

Youth C states that not long after his parents divorced that his mother also remarried. Youth C states that his mother met his stepfather, who did eight years in prison for armed robbery, in Slidell, Louisiana. Youth C claims that he does not have a good relationship with his stepfather because he is "sorry, irresponsible and lazy", and this causes his mother to work all the time. Youth C states that his stepfather had five children of his own – ranging in the ages of one, three, four, six, and seven years—and all of them live in one house in Madison.

Youth C says his stepfather is "sorry, irresponsible and lazy" in that he always tries to borrow monies from him or his younger brother to purchase beer and cigarettes (smokes a pack and half a day). Youth C states that he got angry with his stepfather and cursed him out when he discovered that his stepfather deceived him by saying his mother needed the monies; but she did not. Youth C claims that his stepfather retaliated by hitting him in the back. Youth C states that when his stepfather obtained the monies that he would just get up and go, say nothing to him and leave him babysitting the children.

APPENDIX I

QUESTIONS ON CAIN AND ABEL

Questions on Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1-17)

1. You heard the minister's interpretation of this story. So you write out this story, based on your interpretation of it.

2. If you were Abel, then how would you have responded to Cain's constant acts of jealousy?

3. From your response in question two, are you doing this now in your relationship with others? If yes, how? If no, why not?

4. If you were Cain and God spoke to you, then how would you have responded when God told you the right thing to do?

5. From your response in question four, are you doing this in your relationship with God today? If yes, how? If no, why not?

6. After reading the story of Cain and Abel, what is your interpretation of God's actions when God spoke to Cain about his behavioral and attitude problems?

7. Do you feel that God was fair in God's observation of the gifts that were presented by both Cain and Abel? Explain your answer.

8. Are you able to identify with God's authority as a loving God who wants the best for Cain and Abel, regardless of the choices they have made in the gifts that they presented to God? Explain your answer

9. Explain how God shows love to both brothers, even though Cain did not give God the best that he had to offer.

10. Choose three things from this story that reflects your mindset or conduct and explain your choices (listed below are choices that you can choose from, remember to choose three and explain why you chose them):

    A. matters of self-esteem
    B. matters of anger management
    C. matters of a relationship to God
    D. matters of not feeling guilty about a wrong
    E. matters of consequences
    F. matters of second chance (grace and mercy) given by God
    G. matters of using your gifts and talents, in a positive or negative way

APPENDIX J

CONTEXT ASSOCIATES BIBLICAL QUESTIONS

Context Associates Biblical Questions

Questions from "The Story of Cain and Abel" (Genesis 4:1-17)

How far will jealousy drive you? Explain your answer.

How does anger unchecked manifest itself?

Do you have to master sin? Explain your answer.

Have you ever done anything in anger that you regretted later? Explain your answer.

Have you ever been angry with God? Explain your answer.

Why was Cain angry when God inquired about where his brother was? Explain your answer.

Do you think Cain regretted having killed his brother? Explain your answer.

How does God respond to the death of Abel?

Was Cain marked by the grace of God even in his sin? Why?

What does being a man mean to you?

Are you motivated to be the man God wants you to become? Explain your answer.

Are you willing to make the sacrifices required to be the man God wants you to be? Explain your answer.

How would you define sin?

Are you aware that there are consequences for sin?

How does Jesus' death pay for the wages of sin? Explain your answer.

God knows the attitude and thoughts of your heart, so does it matter to you that God knows your heart? Explain your answer.

Are you aware that there are many blessings for obedience and righteousness?

What are your thoughts about "being your brother's keeper?"

What is your definition of forgiveness?

Do you feel that God is a forgiving God? Explain your answer.

Do you feel that if Cain would have accepted God's advice, asked God for forgiveness, and done better that he would not have killed his brother? Explain your answer.

How important do you feel it is to get control of anger? Explain your answer.

Do you feel that even when we have sinned against God and mankind, God will forgive us if we make things right with our brother and ask for forgiveness? Explain your answer.

Questions from "The Story of Joseph and his Brothers" (Genesis 37; and 45:1-15)

How long would it take you to forgive family members for abandonment?

Do you believe that grace and mercy can change all hearts? Explain your answer.

Can your attitude cause people to hate you? Explain your position.

Do you believe that the things that happen in our lives, God allows them to happen in order to bring out the good that we can not see at the moment? Explain your position.

Are you a favorite child of your parents? Explain your answer.

Does being a favorite son cause that/those brother(s) or sister(s) to hate you? Explain your answer.

Do you plan to let others keep you from succeeding in life? Explain your answer.

Does your attitude for wanting success in life cause your sibling(s) to hate you? Explain your answer.

Will you allow hatred, jealousy or disobedience to keep you from succeeding in life? Explain your answer.

What are your dreams, aspirations, hopes and desires for life?

How does God fit into all of this?

Are you willing to hold onto your dreams, aspirations, hopes and desires for life even when others try to derail you? Explain your answer.

Do you trust God to help you succeed in life? Explain your answer.

What did Joseph's jealous brothers do to him because of his dreams?

How do you see God's plan for Joseph unfolding even in the face of jealousy, lies, and death? Explain your answer.

What feelings does Joseph exhibit in his speech towards his father?

Remembering the story of Joseph, how important is it for you at this point in your life to use the gifts that God has given you to make a difference in the lives of others?

Are you willing to share the gifts, talents, skills and good will that God has given to you with others?

Why do you feel that Joseph was so eager to forgive his brothers for what they did to him?

Was Joseph chosen by God to be sold off to Egypt because he knew of his compassion for love and forgiveness?

Do you feel that Jacob fueled the brothers against Joseph because he favored him the most? Explain your answer.

What do you think after all the jealousy and envy Joseph's brothers had, yet, they chose to sell him instead of kill him? Explain your answer.

Have you ever wanted to do something wrong and had a change of heart because it would displease God?

Did you have a change of heart for other reasons that did not involve God? Explain your answer.

How far would you be willing to go to get what you wanted?

How difficult is it for you to extend mercy to someone who wronged you?

Can you overlook your own hurt and pain when the one who hurt you is in trouble? Explain your answer.

Questions from "The Parable of the Prodigal Son" (Luke 15:11-32)

Do you feel that parents should always let their kids know that despite their short-comings, they are always welcomed in their home?

Do you think the brother was surprised that despite the way the other brother left and misused his inheritance, that his father forgave the other brother, embraced him and celebrated with a royal welcome home? Explain your answer.

Do you want to be free of all parental restrictions and do your own thing?

Are you able to see why parents place restrictions in the home? Explain your answer.

Is it possible for us to burn our bridges where we are unable to cross that bridge again to return to safety or home? Explain your answer.

Do you feel that the father's request to honor his son's wishes caused the separation?

Do you feel that the father was acting fatherly and wanted his son to experience life? Explain your answer.

How does God speak to you in the lesson of "The Parable of the Prodigal Son" as it relates to your relationship with God? Explain your answer.

Do you feel that God does everything in God's power to save you from sin? Explain your answer.

Do you feel that in a sense that the father did what God does to us when we feel that we can stand on our own? Explain your answer.

Have you ever had to admit that you were wrong and ask a person to forgive you and help you again? Explain your answer.

Do you allow your hurt and pain to build-up inside of you before you talk about your feelings? Explain you answer.

Discuss your opinion on how you think the other brother who stayed with his father felt at the return of his brother and how his father welcomed him back even when the brother wasted away his inheritance.

Do you feel that the Prodigal Son teaches us about God's loving spirit and how God wants us to repent of our sins and come back into the safety of God's care?

Are you willing to change your ways for God?

During the Bible Studies, can you truly say that they have helped you better understand the nature of God as well as helped you to have a better relationship with God, your family and others? Explain your answer.

APPENDIX K

SYNOPSIS OF MOVIE: "AMERICA"

Synopsis of Movie: "America"

"America": Psychiatrist Dr. Maureen Brennan (Rosie O'Donnell) encounters a heart-wrenching case in a patient whose name is America (Philip Johnson), who is a teenager, like so many people living on the streets, filled with rage after years of parental neglect, sexual abuse and foster-care red tape. As Dr. Brennan and America sift through the turmoil of his past and move towards healing and wholeness, the memories of Mrs. Harper (Ruby Dee), a kind and strong woman from his childhood, helps America on his journey.

APPENDIX L

QUESTIONS ON MOVIE: "AMERICA"

Questions on Movie: "America"

1. After watching the movie America, how important is it to for you to set a goal, work at it and ultimately accomplish it? Explain

2. What goals have you currently set for yourself? Name at least 3 goals that you would like to accomplish.

3. What happens when someone or something stands in the way of you reaching your goal? Explain how you would handle the situation.

4. When you are unable to accomplish your goals, does it make you angry, sad or you really just don't care and you just give up? Explain how you would react to a situation that caused you not to accomplish your goal.

5. What happens to your dreams when you get to a rough point in your life that you just don't think you can handle? Explain

6. Are there any obstacles in your life currently keeping you from reaching your goals? Explain

7. Do you blame others when you cannot reach your goals? Explain

8. What steps are you currently taking to make sure your goals are set or that you accomplish your goals? Explain.

APPPENDIX M

SYNOPSIS OF MOVIE: "DECISIONS"

Synopsis of Movie: "Decisions"

"Decisions": (Starring Master P and Lil' Romeo) This movie was written and directed by Master P. The film is about how life has a peculiar way of forcing one to make decisions for better or worse. In this movie, Master P plays a young man who was exposed to crime and violence, and ended up in prison. He gets out on parole and continues to traffick drugs and not support himself by getting a legal and lawful job. He lands himself back in prison for attacking the man, who sold drugs to his mother. He allows a tough decision to cause him to lose his freedom. What would you have done if you were faced with a similar situation?

APPENDIX N

OFFICER BOB CORNELISON'S INFORMATION

HUNTSVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

South Precinct

Community Relations

7900 Bailey Cove Road

Huntsville, Alabama 35802

Officer Bob Cornelison

Office Phone Number: 256-213-4550

Cell Phone Number: [redacted]

Email Address Bob.Cornelison@hsvcity.com

APPENDIX O

SYNOPSIS OF MOVIE: "PRINCE OF TIDES"

Synopsis of Movie: "Prince of Tides"

"Prince of Tides": A Southern school teacher (Nick Nolte), with a dark past travels to New York City and unloads a lifetime of horrific experiences and repressed memories to a psychiatrist (Barbara Streisand) in order to help save his suicidal sister. This movie is both heartfelt and tearful as the scenes unfold numerous traumatic incidents of a Southern family exposed to violence and shame.

APPENDIX P

SELF-REFLECTION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONNAIRES

(PART ONE AND PART TWO)

Self-Reflection Questionnaire (Part One)

(1) Looking back and reflecting upon your self-image, do you feel that there were areas that needed improving? Yes____ No_____

(2) Reflect upon your self-esteem and the importance of being accepted by others. Do you feel that it is important to have positive self-esteem when it comes to decision making? Yes____ No____

(3) Before you agreed to participate in this program, describe your level of self-esteem.

(a.) Average___
(b.) Above Average ___
(c.) Good ___
(d.) Fair ___
(e.) Negative___
(f.) None existent ___

(4.) After you participated in the research project, how would you describe your self-image?

(a) Improved tremendously ____
(b) Improved a little____
(c) Stayed at the same level____
(d) Did not improve at all ____

(5.) Reflect upon past family situations with family member(s) or a family member that makes you or made you angry. Before you entered this research project, how did you handle your anger and the situation? (Mark all that apply to the experiences you have had). If the situation or experience does not apply to you, leave the statement blank.

(a.) You let the individual know how you felt, and it ended in a fight. ____

(b.) You just walked away and decided to cool-off by playing a sports activity, working-out, going for a drive or watching the television behind closed doors.____

(c.) You were so angry that you got out of control and you ended up in jail or in a juvenile facility as a result of ungovernable behavior. ____
(d.) You usually do not do anything to control your anger, you just go for what you know and worry about the consequences later ____

(6.) Reflect upon how you handle situations with family members or a family member that makes you or made you angry as a result of participating in the research project.

(a.) You handled the situation the same way you did before you participated in the research project. ____

(b.) The research project provided anger management tools that assisted you in dealing with situations involving family members or a family member that made or makes you angry. ____

(c.) After participating in the program, you are able to better control your anger when dealing with family situations ____

(7.) In reflection of past events, name one loss or separation that made you sad.

_____

_____

(8.) How did you deal with this situation? (Mark all that applies to how you handled your experience).

(a.) You were angry and upset, but you did not cry or tell anyone how you felt. ____
(b.) You cried after sharing it with a friend or loved one ____
(c.) You cried because you felt that you were alone and no one understood ____
(d.) You just sucked it up and dealt with it, even though you were hurting ____
(e.) The situation did not bother you at all because you are a man and a man is not supposed to allow anything to get him down ____
(f.) You did not deal with it at all and you just pushed it to the side to be dealt with later ____

(9.) In reflection of past events that have transpired, if you could change one thing about yourself, in terms of how you handled a situation or mended a broken relationship with a family member or members, what would you change? (Mark all that you would change).

(a) You would ask the individual for forgiveness ____
(b) You would not change anything and continue on as things are____
(c) You would make an honest attempt to develop a relationship with the individual____
(d) You would talk things over with the individual to hear their side of the story____
(e) You would do nothing on your part to make amends, you would wait for the other person to ask for forgiveness because it was their fault that things ended the way they did _____

(10.) Reflect upon your spirituality before you participated in this program. Do you feel that you learned more about God and what it means to have a relationship with God? (Mark all that apply to your reflection).

(a.) You did not learn anything about God and you did not expect to ____
(b.) You gained knowledge from the Bible discussions that were shared____
(c.) You did not learn anything from the Bible discussions that were shared_____
(d.) You are knowledgeable about the Bible because you attend Sunday School and church services on a regular basis ____
(e.) You know nothing about God because you do not see the importance of going to church and as a result God does not have a place in you life____
(f.) Church is for weaklings and real men do not need to go to church____
(g.) You have an honest desire to develop a relationship with God, but you need help in order to head in the right direction _____
(h.) You have been baptized and attend church services, but you are still lost when it comes to the knowledge of God____
(i.) God has no place in your life now because you are busy doing other things___
God is real to you, you just don't know how to have a relationship with God___
(j.) You haven't been baptized, you do not care to be baptized, and you do not go to church ____

Reflection Questionnaire (Part Two)

Youth A, B and C, your job is to describe the other persons in the group the way you view them now. You must be very honest in this exercise.

Describe his personality. _____

_____

_____

Describe his overall appearance. _____

_____

_____

Describe his attitude. _____

_____

_____

Would you choose him as a friend, if you did not know him based on your answers?

_____

_____

APPENDIX Q

POST-QUESTIONNAIRE

Post-Questionnaire

(1.) On a scale of one (lowest level) to ten (highest level), how would you rate yourself?____

(2.) Do you fit in with your peers? I fit in __ I struggle to fit in __ I don't fit in at all __

(3.) Do you believe that you are a child of God? Yes__ No__

(4.) Do you wish you could be living somewhere else besides this area? Yes__

No__ If yes, where would you want to be and why?

why?_____

_____

_____

(5.) Are you satisfied with where you are in life at this moment? Yes__ No__ If no, where would you be and why?

_____

_____

(6.) Do you believe that God can help you in any situation? Yes__ No__

(7.) When you fall short of your goals in life, who do you blame? Yourself __ Other people__ Different situations__ God__ Devil__

(8.) When you fall short of your goals in life, what do you do about it? Work out another plan ___ Give up on what you were pursuing___ Pray to God for another opportunity ___Ask your parents and/or friends for advice___ Other___

(9.) Within the past three months, have you lost your temper for any reason? Yes__ No____ If yes, what was the situation and how did you resolve that situation?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(10.) Have these sessions helped you to control your anger? Yes__ No__ Sometimes__ Maybe__

(11.) What were the strengths of the research project that you felt helped you?_____

_____

(12.) What were the weaknesses of the research project you felt were a waste of time?

_____

_____

_____

(13.) What would you recommend that the research project do to help other young males?

_____

_____

_____

(14.) How would you rate the overall performance and effectiveness of the research project on a scale of one (being the least) and ten (being the highest)?

_____

(15.) Do you feel the research project could benefit other young males? Yes__ No__

APPENDIX R

SYNOPSIS OF MOVIE: "GRACE AND MERCY"

Synopsis of Movie: "Grace and Mercy"

"Grace and Mercy": Based on a true story where two sisters Grace (Kyra Groves) and Mercy (Ashley Reid) are broke, busted and disgusted. Grace puts together a reckless plan to rob her ex-employer. But when the heist goes awry, the sisters seek refuge in a church, and take the pastor and several members hostage. While the police negotiate with the two fugitives, the clergyman offers them spiritual guidance. They are faced with going to prison and must make a decision to turn themselves over to the police. Grace also has a young daughter and she herself is very sick. Grace does not want her daughter to be faced with a life of poverty and shame, so she takes what is not hers. Is there any redemption for Grace and Mercy in a dismal situation such as this?

APPENDIX S

AGENDAS FOR SESSION ONE THRU SESSION EIGHTEEN

Session One

Session	Type of Event	Length of Event	Attendance	Place of Session
One	Project's Orientation	One Hour	6	Grady-Madison
AGENDA				
Opening Prayer (3 minutes)	Introduction of the Researcher, Investigator and Youth Participants			
(1.)	Length of the research project is 18 sessions over a 3 or 4 month period depending on the progress of the research project and the development of the group.			
(2.)	During the orientation session, the statement of purpose for the research project was given by the researcher and formal introductions were made. Youth's confidentiality and right of consent were discussed as well as the objectives of the research project.			
Individual Sessions of the research project will include:				
(a.)	The Sessions will include five movies for visual aids			
	The movies included: "Antwone Fisher", and the other four will be selected by the context associates.			
(b.)	Three one-on-one interviews with one interview near the beginning of the research project, a second interview towards the middle, and a third interview towards the end of the research project. Each one-on-one interview generated questions related to demographics, family and friends, and circumstances in the lives of the youth.			
(c.)	Four Bible studies with teaching by the evaluation team, discussions from youth and questions and answers. The Bible lessons included stories about Cain and Abel, Joseph and his brothers (2 Parts), Ezekiel and the Valley of the Dry Bones, and the Prodigal Son.			
(d.)	Two sessions included group therapy to discuss general issues that the youths' share; to reiterate the research project's objectives; and to remind the youth that their participation is needed for the success of the research project.			
(e.)	Two workshops that were led by two different individuals concerning major and minor psychological, emotional and spiritual issues that arose from the youth in group discussions.			
(f.)	One rap session used as a recreational activity to help the youth develop social skills, experience social bonding and discuss their views in a more relaxed setting.			
(g.)	This panel discussion involved the evaluation team, context associates and the youth. This session consisted of a spiritual reflection of previous Bible lessons, except the context associates asked the youth different questions. The purpose of this discussion was to assist the youth further in their spiritual development. The panel discussion was important to the research project because it served as an indicator of the youths' ability to retain biblical information. A movie had been shown for learning and fellowship purposes, and refreshments served.			
(h.)	The researcher highlighted the involvement of the peers, context and professional associates and the evaluation team who were involved in the research project. (55 minutes)			
(i.)	Closing prayer (2 minutes)			

Session Two

Session	Type of Event	Length of Event	Attendance	Place of Session
Two	Movie: "*Antwone Fisher*"	Two hours and 10 minutes	6	Grady-Madison AMEC
Objectives:				
(1.) to use the movie "*Antwone Fisher*" as a visual resource to highlight the research project's objectives; (2.) to explain further the research project's objectives and to discuss themes from the movie; (3.) to demonstrate that it is okay for males to cry when grieving over unresolved issues and that dealing with unresolved issues or unfinished business leads to healing and wholeness; and (4.) to learn more about the feelings of the youth through discussions on the movie.				
AGENDA				
(a.) Opening prayer (3 minutes)				
(b.) Collect the youths' pre-questionnaire and spiritual autobiography (1 minute)				
(c.) Reiterate the research project's objectives (8 minutes)				
(d.) Provide a synopsis on the movie "*Antwone Fisher*" (five minutes)				
(e.) Watch the movie "*Antwone Fisher*" (one hour and fifteen minutes)				
(f.) Sharing through discussions on issues from the movie "*Antwone Fisher*" (25 minutes)				
(g.) Summary of session, and question and answer period (10 minutes)				
(h.)Homework questions given to the youth on the movie "*Antwone Fisher*" (1 minute)				
(i.) Closing prayer (2 minutes)				

Session Three

Session	Type of Event	Length of Event	Attendance	Place of Session
Three	One-on-One Interviews	Four hours	6	Grady-Madison AMEC

Objectives:

(1.) to learn more about the youth;
(2.) to investigate situations of fact findings that were unclear from the pre-questionnaire, spiritual autobiography, written questions and discussions from the movie "*Antwone Fisher*", which led to the development of the youth's profile;
(3.) to generate discussions to answer research questions of possible hurt and pain, both mentioned and unmentioned;
(4.) to allow the youth to have a voice about how they feel and to provide them with an empathetic understanding through discussions of unresolved grief that was visible and hidden; and
(5.) to gain the youths' trust by creating an environment that is non-judgmental and biased.

AGENDA

(a.) Opening prayer (2 minutes)
(b.) Collect youth homework questions on the movie "*Antwone Fisher*" (1 minute)
(c.) One-on-one interviews (50 minutes)
(d.) Summary of session, and question and answer period (5 minutes)
(e.) Closing prayer (2 minutes)

Session Four

Session	Type of Event	Length of Event	Attendance	Place of Session
Four	Group Therapy	One hour	6	Grady-Madison AMEC
Objectives:				
(1.) to examine whether bonding between the youth have been effective; (2.) to discuss further issues on self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation; (3.) to find out from the youth if they were able to identify with the issues that have been addressed in relationship to their personal lives; (4.) to discuss the pros/cons of self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation issues; and (5.) to utilize the researcher's personal experiences of hurt and pain as a forum to allow the youth to be open to their own hurt and pain.				
AGENDA				
(a.) Opening prayer (3 minutes)				
(b.) Generate a discussion for the pros/cons of self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation issues that emerged from the movie "*Antwone Fisher*" (30 minutes)				
(c.) Personal reflections were used as a therapeutic tool by the evaluation team to allow the youth to visualize to the importance of learning to cope with life issues so that healing and wholeness might occur (15 minutes)				
(d.) Summary of session, and question and answer period (10 minutes)				
(e.) Closing prayer (2 minutes)				

Session Five

Session	Type of Event	Length of Event	Attendance	Place of Session
Five	Bible Study	One hour	6	Grady-Madison AMEC

Objectives:

(1.) to use the Bible lesson of "The Story of Cain and Abel" (Genesis 4:1-17) as a learning tool for issues of self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation;
(2.) to discuss spiritual matters of second chance (grace and mercy);
(3.) to address related issues that develop in families among siblings and how these issues affect an individuals self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation from loved one;
(4.) to stress the importance of the biblical application of Cain and Abel's relationship with God and to visualize themselves from Cain and Abel's points of view;
(5.) to highlight the spiritual matters of establishing a relationship with God; and
(6.) to allow the youth to understand that they have been given gifts, skills, talents and good will by God, and it is up to the youth to develop and use them.

AGENDA

(a.) Opening prayer (3 minutes)
(b.) Reading the Bible lesson by the youth on "The Story of Cain and Abel" (5 minutes)
(c.) Explanation of the text from the youths' point of view and apply it to their personal lives. This discussion will be done as a group discussion as the youth interact with each other (20 minutes)
(d.) The researcher will use the Bible lesson as a teaching tool to address issues of self-esteem, anger management and aggression, loss and separation, consequences of one's own actions, each person has spiritual products (gifts, skills, talent and good will) and to establish a relationship with God as a result of being able to understand who God is. (20 minutes)
(e.) Summary of session, and question and answer period (10 minutes)
(f.) Closing prayer (2 minutes)

Session Six

Session	Type of Event	Length of Event	Attendance	Place of Session
Six	Movie: "*America*"	Two hours	5	Grady-Madison AMEC
Objectives:				
(1.) to use the movie "*America*" as a visual resource to highlight the research project's objectives; (2.) to emphasize the research project's objectives; (3.) to discuss major themes from the movie, which were self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation; (4.) to show that it is alright for males to cry when grieving matters of hurt and pain because this could lead to their healing and wholeness; and (5.) to learn more about the youth through discussions on the movie.				
AGENDA				
(a.) Opening prayer (3 minutes)				
(b.) The researcher reiterated the research project's objectives (5 minutes)				
(c.) Synopsis of the movie "*America*" followed by the watching of the movie (one hour and ten minutes)				
(d.) Sharing through discussion on themes that emerged from the movie such as self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation (30 minutes)				
(e.) Summary of session, and question and answer period (10 minutes)				
(f.) Closing prayer (2 minutes)				

Session Seven

(Part One)

Session	Type of Event	Length of Event	Attendance	Place of Session
Seven	Bible Study	One hour	5	Grady-Madison AMEC

Objectives:

(1.) to use the Bible lesson of "The Story of Joseph and his Brothers" (Genesis 37) (Part 1) as a learning tool for self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation;
(2.) to be honest with oneself rather than to be dishonest;
(3.) to reflect upon the bond of a family;
(4.) to understand the importance of having a relationship with God and God's involvement in one's lives; and
(5.) to identify problems that might arise between siblings that could result in loss and separation.

AGENDA

(a.) Opening prayer (3 minutes)
(b.) Reading of the Bible lesson by the youth on "The Story of Joseph and his Brothers" (5 minutes)
(c.) Explanation and interpretation of scripture by the youth (20 minutes)
(d.) Sharing through discussion on themes that emerged from the Bible lesson such as self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation as they relate to real life situations (20 minutes)
(e.) Summary of session, and question and answer period (10 minutes)
(f.) Closing prayer (2 minutes)

Session Eight

(Part Two)

Session	Type of Event	Length of Event	Attendance	Place of Session
Eight	Bible Study and Rap Session	Two Hours	5	Huntsville Public Library

Objectives:

(1.) to use the Bible lesson of "The Story of Joseph and his Brothers" (Genesis 45:1-15) (Part 2) as a learning tool for self-esteem, anger management and aggression, loss and separation, and forgiveness;
(2.) to observe if social bonding had taken place among the youth;
(3.) to continue to provide a non-judgmental and supportive environment ;
(4.) to create an environment for the youth where they could speak honestly about their feelings;
(5.) to create a relaxed social environment that involved recreation and socializing; and
(6.) to demonstrate to the youth that the researcher had their best interest at heart.

AGENDA

(a.) Opening prayer (3 minutes)
(b.) Recap of Genesis 37 and Bible lesson on "The Story of Joseph and his Brothers" (30 minutes)
(c.) Summary of session, and question and answer period (10 minutes)
(d.) Social function took place at CECE'S all you can eat pizza, soup and salad bar (one hour and 15 minutes)
(e.) Closing prayer (2 minutes)

Session Nine

Session	Type of Event	Length of Event	Attendance	Place of Session
Nine	Movie: "*Decisions*"	Two hours	5	Grady-Madison AMEC

Objectives:

(1.) to use the movie "*Decisions*" as a visual resource to highlight the research project's objectives;
(2.) to find purpose and direction by applying the movie "*Decisions*" to real life situations;
(3.) to be honest with oneself rather than to be dishonest;
(4.) to reiterate the research project's objectives;
(5.) to discuss the themes that emerged from the movie "*Decisions*" such as self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation; and
(6.) to learn more about youth through dialogue concerning decisions they made for better or worse, in relationship to the movie.

AGENDA

(a.) Opening prayer (3 minutes)
(b.) Researcher will reiterate the research project's objectives (5 minutes)
(c.) Synopsis of the movie "*Decisions*" (5 minutes)
(d.) Watch the movie "*Decisions*" (1 hour and 25 minutes)
(e.) Sharing through open discussions regarding positive/negative experiences that caused you to make personal decisions that may or may not have been reflective of one's self-image. (15 minutes)
(f.) Summary of session, and question and answer period (5 minutes)
(g.) Closing prayer (2 minutes)

Session Ten

Session	Type of Event	Length of Event	Attendance	Place of Session
Ten	Bible Study	One hour	5	Grady-Madison AMEC

Objectives:

(1.) to use the story of "Ezekiel in the Valley of Dry Bones" (Ezekiel 37:1-14) as a learning tool;
(2.) to demonstrate how God works on one's behalf when situations seem hopeless;
(3.) to reflect upon the importance of the power of God and the place that God should have in one's life;
(4.) to reemphasize the importance of having a relationship with God and God's involvement in one's lives; and
(5.) to identify with the youths' faith such as belief in God and to have faith in God during difficult situations.

AGENDA

(a.) Opening prayer (3 minutes)
(b.) Reading of the Bible lesson by the youth (5 minutes)
(c.) Explanation and interpretation of scriptures by the youth (10 minutes)
(d.)Sharing through discussions on themes that emerged from the Bible lesson (30 minutes)
(e.) Summary of session, and question and answer period (10 minutes)
(f.) Closing prayer (2 minutes)

Session Eleven

Session	Type of Event	Length of Event	Attendance	Place of Session
Eleven	One-on-One Interviews	Three hours	5	Huntsville Public Library

Objectives:

(1.) to learn more about the youth;
(2.) to investigate findings about the youth that were unclear from the Bible studies, movies, group therapy and rap session;
(3.) to generate discussions to locate areas of possible unresolved grief, both mentioned and unmentioned;
(4.) to allow the youth to have a voice about how they feel and to provide them with support as they discuss unresolved grief;
(5.) to gain the youths' trust by creating an environment that was non-judgmental and biased;
(6.) to gain an understanding from the youths' viewpoint of what the research project was about; and
(7.) to make recommendations on how to resolve the hurt and pain in the lives of the youth.

AGENDA

(a.) Opening prayer (3 minutes)
(b.) One-on-one interviews (50 minutes for each youth)
(c.) Summary of session, and question and answer period (5 minutes)
(d.) Closing prayer (2 minutes)

Session Twelve

Session	Type of Event	Length of Event	Attendance	Place of Session
Twelve	Workshop One	One hour and 20 minutes	6	Huntsville Public Library

Objectives:

(1.) to give information and education about character building;
(2.) to address youths' issues of self esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation;
(3.) to present decision-making skills (positive and negative) in the life of a police officer and Army Veteran;
(4.) to create a relaxed social environment that involves recreation and socializing;
(5.) to demonstrate the importance of having a positive self-image; and
(6.) to establish how the participants feel about the presenters discussion in application to personal life experiences.

AGENDA

(a.) Opening prayer (3 minutes)
(b.) Introduction of workshop Presenter (5 minutes)
(c) Presentation by Officer Cornelison (one hour)
(d.) Summary of session, and question and answer period (10 minutes)
(e.) Closing prayer (2 minutes)

Session Thirteen

Session	Type of Event	Length of Event	Attendance	Place of Session
Thirteen	Bible Study	One hour and 15 minutes	5	Huntsville Public Library

Objectives:

(1.) to use the biblical story of "The Parable of the Prodigal Son" (Luke 15:11-32) as a learning tool to address the issues of self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation;
(2.) to discuss spiritual matters of second chance (grace and mercy);
(3.) to highlight the spiritual products of gifts, talents, skills and good will, and demonstrate how they can be affected by the decisions that one makes;
(4.) to reemphasize the importance of a relationship with God and God's involvement in one's life; and
(5.) to talk with the youth about faith in God during difficult situations.

AGENDA

(a.) Opening prayer (3 minutes)
(b.) Reading of the Bible lesson by a youth on "The Parable of Prodigal Son" (5 minutes)
(c.) Explanation and interpretation of the scripture lesson by the participants (10 minutes)
(d.) Sharing through discussion on themes that emerged from the Bible lesson (20 minutes)
(e.) The researcher will glean from the Bible lesson issues of self-esteem, anger management and aggression, loss and separation, decision making, spiritual products and a relationship with God in application to everyday life issues. (25 minutes)
(f.) Summary of session, and question and answer period (10 minutes)
(g.) Closing prayer (2 minutes)

Session Fourteen

Session	Type of Event	Length of Event	Attendance	Place of Session
Fourteen	Movie: "*Prince of Tides*"	Three hours and 15 minutes	5	Grady-Madison AMEC

Objectives:

(1.) to use the movie "*Prince of Tides*" as a visual resource to highlight the research project's objectives;
(2.) to be honest with oneself ;
(3.) to reiterate the research project's objectives;
(4.) to discuss themes that emerged throughout the research project as reflected in the movie, in particular self-esteem, maintenance of relationships, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation; and
(5.) to learn more about the youth through dialogue based on the decisions they made for better or worse.

AGENDA

(a.) Opening prayer (3 minutes)
(b.) Researcher will reiterate the research project's objectives and a synopsis of the movie (15 minutes)
(c.) Movie shown was "*Prince of Tides*" (2 hours and 15 minutes)
(c) Discussion of issues in the movie entitled "*Prince of Tides*" (30 minutes)
(d.) Summary of session, and question and answer period (10 minutes)
(e) Closing prayer (2 minutes)

Session Fifteen

Session	Type of Event	Length of Event	Attendance	Place of Session
Fifteen	Group Therapy	One hour and 15 minutes	5	Huntsville Public Library
Objectives:				
(1.) to continue to discuss issues on self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation; (2.) to highlight how unresolved grief and pain will follow one into adulthood; and (3.) to evaluate the participants' development through group discussions.				
AGENDA				
(a.) Opening prayer (3 minutes)				
(b.) Reiterate the objectives of the research project (5 minutes)				
(c.) Group therapy session (55 minutes)				
(d.) Summary of session, and question and answer period (10 minutes)				
(e.) Closing prayer (2 minutes)				

Session Sixteen

Session	Type of Event	Length of Event	Attendance	Place of Session
Sixteen	Workshop Two	One hour and 15 minutes	5	Huntsville Public Library

Objectives:

(1.) to give information and education about the importance of self-reflection;
(2.) to use self-reflection as a teaching tool to demonstrate the positive effect it has on self-esteem, maintenance of relationships, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation;
(3.) to expose self-reflection (positive/negative) through group participation;
(4.) to demonstrate the importance of closure through self-reflection;
(5.) to measure the participant's growth as a result of the one-on-one interviews, Bible studies, movies, workshops, rap sessions, group therapy and spiritual autobiography.

AGENDA

(a.) Opening prayer (3 minutes)
(b.) Introduction of workshop Presenter (5 minutes)
(c.) Workshop on reflection and self-reflection (55 minutes)
(d.) Summary of session, and question and answer period (10 minutes)
(e.) Closing prayer (2 minutes)

Session Seventeen

Session	Type of Event	Length of Event	Attendance	Place of Session
Seventeen	Exit Interviews	Three hours	5	Huntsville Public Library

Objectives:

(1.) to discuss findings in relationship to themes that emerged throughout the research project, which were self-esteem, anger management and aggression, and loss and separation;
(2.) to offer the youth an opportunity to debate the findings as it related to their personal profiles;
(3.) to generate discussion to answer research questions for areas of possible grief, both mentioned and unmentioned;
(4.) to allow the youth to voice on how they felt and to provide understanding concerning their unresolved grief;
(5.) to gain the youths' trust by creating an environment that was non-judgmental and biased;
(6.) to seek a better understanding from the youths' viewpoint on what the research project was about;
(7.) to make recommendations to resolve "identified hurt and pain" in their lives; and
(8.) to allow the youth to provide feedback on how to improve the research project.

AGENDA

(a.) Opening prayer (3 minutes)
(b.) One-on-one interviews (50 minutes for each youth)
(c.) Summary of session, and question and answer period (5 minutes)
(d.) Closing prayer (2 minutes)

Session Eighteen

Session	Type of Event	Length of Event	Attendance	Place of Session
Eighteen	Panel Discussion and Movie: "*Grace and Mercy*"	Two hours and 15 minutes	10	Grady-Madison AMEC

Objectives:

(1.) to use the movie "*Grace and Mercy*" as a visual resource to highlight the research project's objectives;
(2.) to gain knowledge of the youths' ability to reflect on the different learning tools used for the purposes to demonstrate how one can find wholeness or liberation;
(3.) to measure the knowledge and educational information the participants have gained as a result of their participation in the research project;
(4.) to address issues of self-esteem, maintenance of relationships, anger management and aggression; and loss and separation through questions addressed to the participants by the peer associates to confirm the effectiveness of bible study sessions;
(5.) to establish how the participants feel about the general discussion in relationship to their own personal situations; and
(6.) to examine the participant's growth as a result of the Bible studies, one-on-one interviews, movies, workshops, rap sessions, group therapy, pre-questionnaire and spiritual autobiography.

AGENDA

(a.) Opening prayer (3 minutes)
(b.) Researcher presents the overall research project/objectives, and gives a synopsis on the movie (15 minutes)
(c.) Context Associates asks biblical and practical life application questions of the youth (45 minutes)
(d.) Movie "*Grace and Mercy*" shown (1 hour)
(e.) Summary of session, and question and answer period (10 minutes)
(f.) Closing prayer (2 minutes)

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